

EAST CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 450-1450

# At Europe's Borders

## *Medieval Towns in the Romanian Principalities*



Laurențiu Rădvan



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BRILL

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the Romanian Principalities

East Central and Eastern  
Europe in the Middle Ages,  
450–1450

*General Editor*  
Florin Curta

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# At Europe's Borders

Medieval Towns in the Romanian Principalities

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To Mihaela, Alexandru and my entire family



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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AARMSI</i>	<i>Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice</i>
<i>AIIAI</i>	<i>Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Arheologia Moldovei</i>
<i>AO</i>	<i>Arhivele Olteniei</i>
<i>APH</i>	<i>Acta Poloniae Historica</i>
<i>BCMI</i>	<i>Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice</i>
<i>BHR</i>	<i>Bulgarian Historical Review</i>
<i>BMIM</i>	<i>București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Cercetări Arheologice</i>
<i>CDTR</i>	<i>Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului</i>
<i>DH</i>	<i>Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki</i>
<i>DIR</i>	<i>Documente privind istoria României</i>
<i>DRH</i>	<i>Documenta Romaniae Historica</i>
<i>EB</i>	<i>Etudes Balkaniques</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>Etudes Historiques</i>
<i>HU</i>	<i>Historia Urbana</i>
<i>MCA</i>	<i>Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice</i>
<i>MIM</i>	<i>Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revista Arhivelor</i>
<i>RC</i>	<i>Revista Catolică</i>
<i>RDI</i>	<i>Revista de Istorie</i>
<i>RESEE</i>	<i>Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes</i>
<i>RI</i>	<i>Revista Istorică</i>
<i>RIAF</i>	<i>Revista pentru Istorie, Arheologie și Filologie</i>
<i>RIR</i>	<i>Revista Istorică Română</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>Revista Muzeelor</i>
<i>RMMMIA</i>	<i>Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor, series Monumente Istorice și de Artă</i>
<i>RRH</i>	<i>Revue Roumaine d'Histoire</i>
<i>SAI</i>	<i>Studii și Articole de Istorie</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Studia Balcanica</i>
<i>SCIV</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche</i>
<i>SCIVA</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie</i>

<i>SCȘI</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări Științifice, Iași</i>
<i>SF</i>	<i>Südost-Forschungen</i>
<i>SMIM</i>	<i>Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie</i>
<i>SRDI</i>	<i>Studii. Revista de Istorie</i>

## LIST OF RULERS UNTIL C. 1550<sup>1</sup>

### *Wallachia*

Radu Negru (c. 1290–1323/1324?)  
Basarab I (c. 1324–1352)  
Nicolae Alexandru (1352–1364)  
Vladislav I (1364–c. 1376)  
Radu I (c. 1376–1385)  
Dan I (1385–1386)  
Mircea the Old (1386–1418)  
Vlad the Usurper (1396)  
Mihail I (1418–1420)  
Radu II Prasnaglava (1420–1422)  
Dan II (1422–1431)  
Alexandru Aldea (1431–1436)  
Vlad the Dragon (1436–1442, 1444–1447)  
Basarab II (1442–1444)  
Vladislav II (1447–1456)  
Vlad the Impaler (1456–1462, 1476–1477)  
Radu the Handsome (1462–1475)  
Laiotă Basarab (1475–1476, 1477)  
Basarab the Young (1478–1482)  
Vlad the Monk (1482–1495)  
Radu the Great (1495–1508)  
Mihnea the Mean (1508–1509)  
Mircea III (1509–1510)  
Vlad the Young (1510–1512)  
Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521)  
Teodosie (1521–1522)  
Vlad Dragomir the Monk (1521)  
Radu of Afumați (1522–1529)  
Moise (1529–1530)

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<sup>1</sup> See Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova. a. 1324–1881*, I. *Secolele XIV–XVI* (Bucharest, 2001).



Vlad the Drowned (1530–1532)  
Vlad Vintilă (1532–1535)  
Radu Paisie (1535–1545)  
Mircea the Shepherd (1545–1552, 1553–1554, 1558–1559)

*Moldavia*

Dragoș (c. 1345/1347–c. 1354)  
Sas (c. 1354–c. 1363)  
Bogdan I (c. 1363/1364–c. 1367/1368)  
Lațcu (c. 1367/1368–1375)  
Petru I (1375–1391)  
Roman I (c. 1391/1392–1394)  
Ștefan I (1394–1399)  
Iuga (1399–1400)  
Alexandru the Good (1400–1432)  
Ilie I (1432–1433, 1435–1436)  
Ștefan II (1433–1435, 1442–1447)  
Ilie I and Ștefan II (1435/1436–1442)  
Roman II (1447–1448)  
Petru II (1447–1448)  
Alexandru II (1448–1449, 1452–1454, 1455)  
Bogdan II (1449–1451)  
Petru Aron (1451–1452, 1454, 1455–1457)  
Ștefan the Great (1457–1504)  
Bogdan III the Blind (1504–1517)  
Ștefăniță (1517–1527)  
Petru Rareș (1527–1538, 1541–1546)  
Ștefan the Locust (1538–1540)  
Alexandru Cornea (1540–1541)  
Iliăș Rareș (1546–1551)  
Ștefan Rareș (1551–1552)

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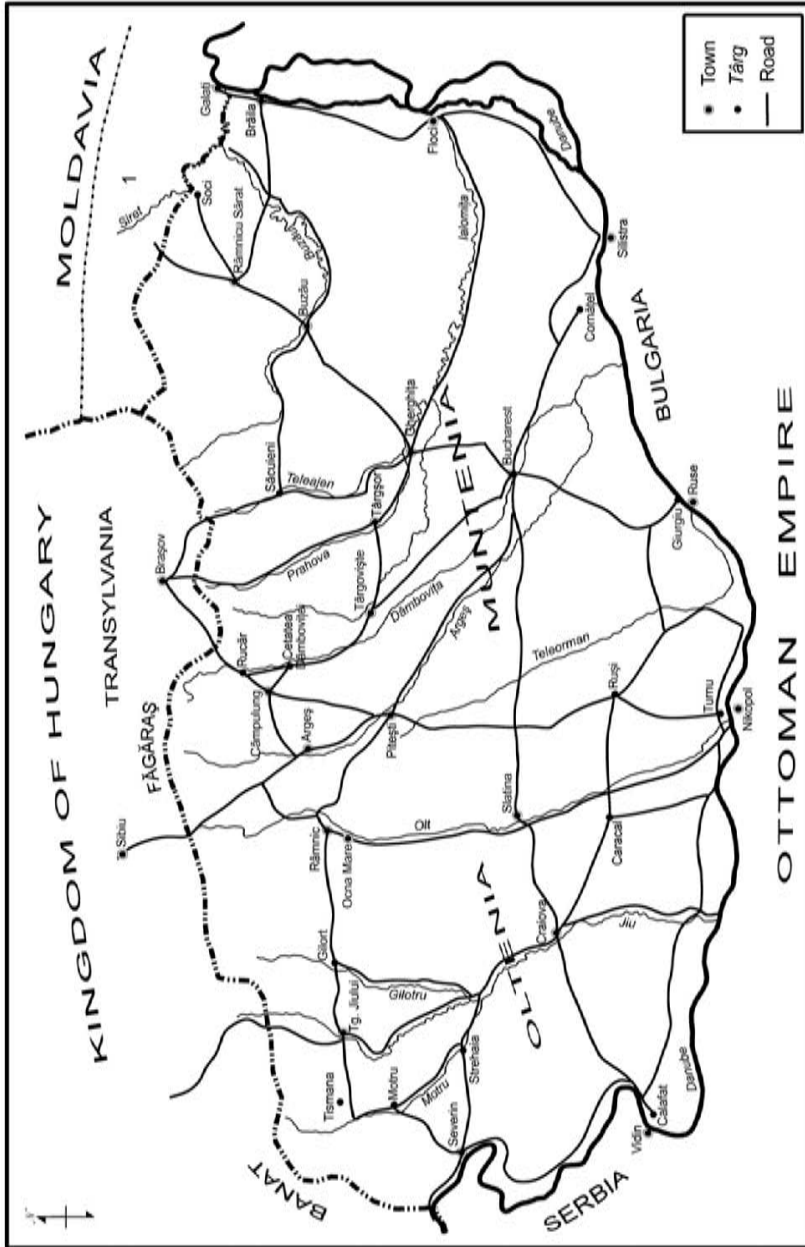


The seal of Baia.

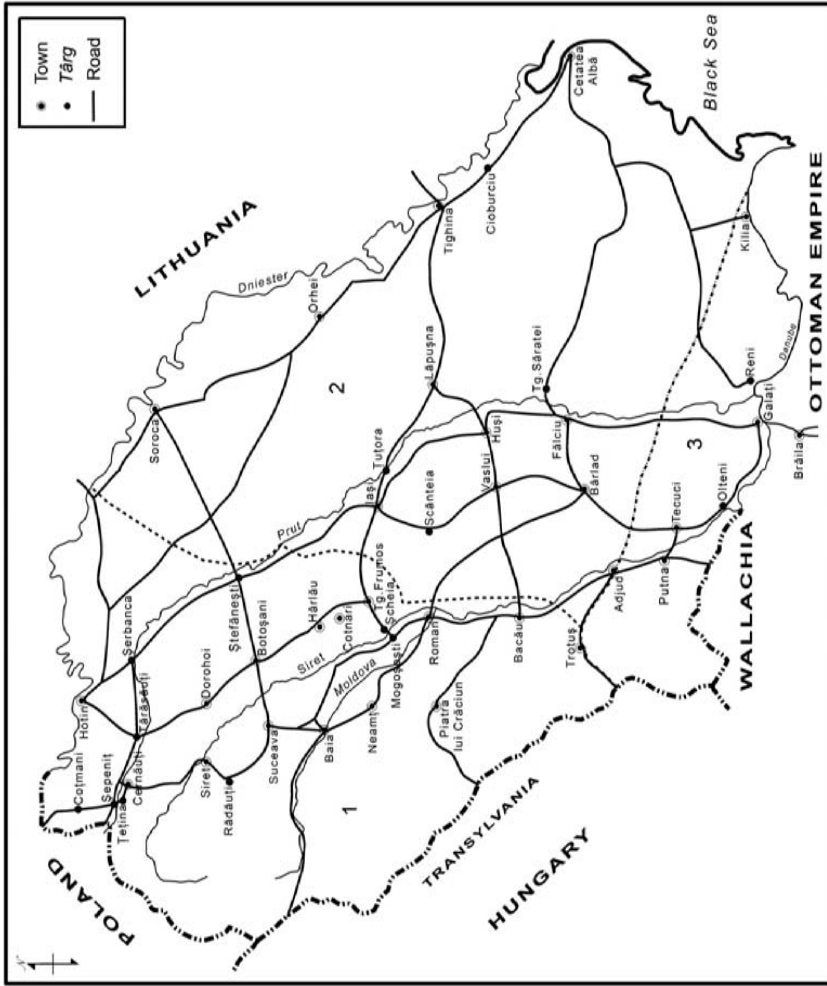




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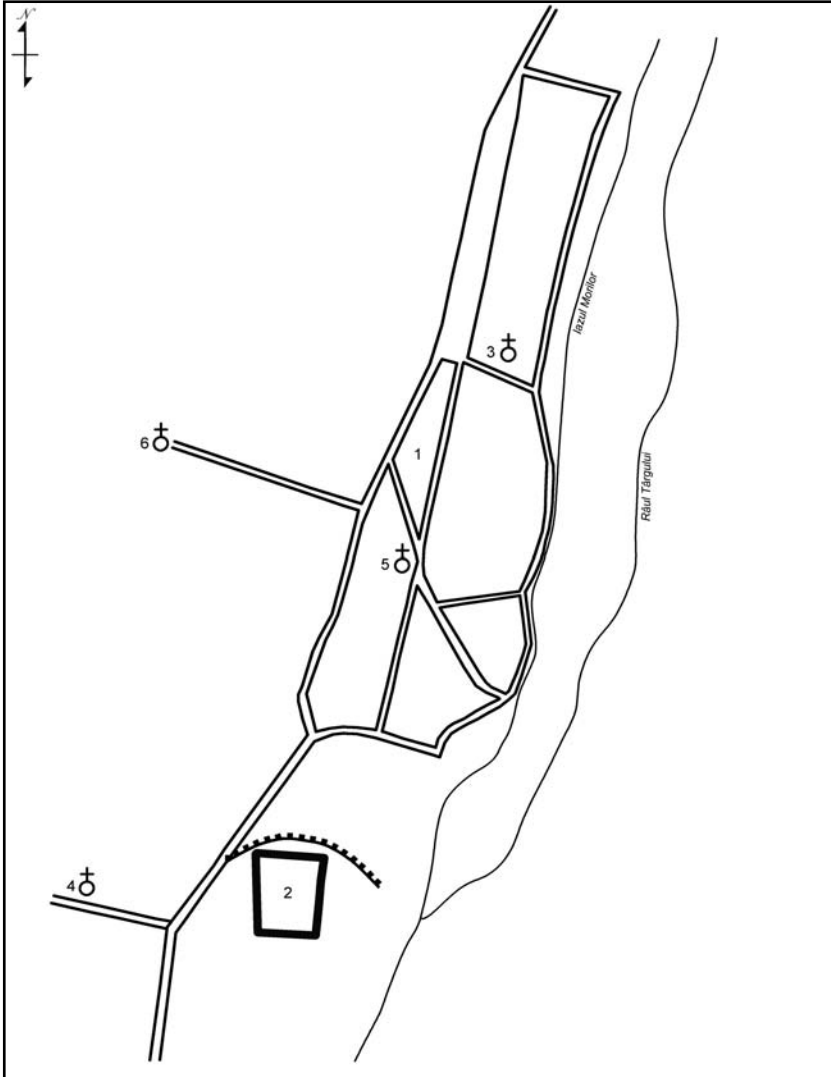


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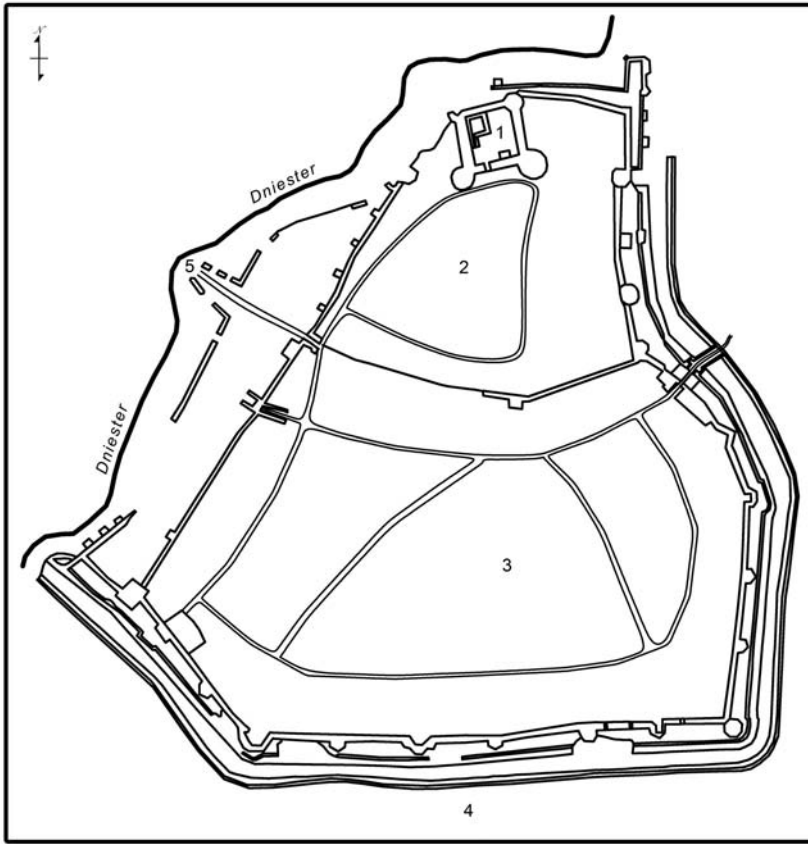


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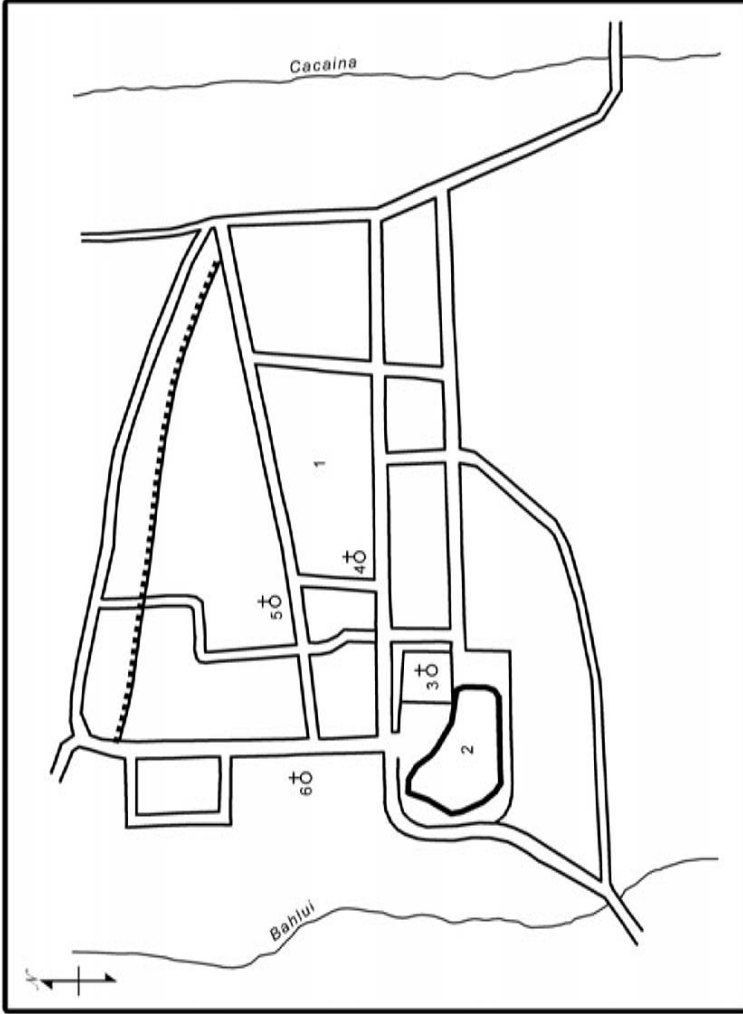
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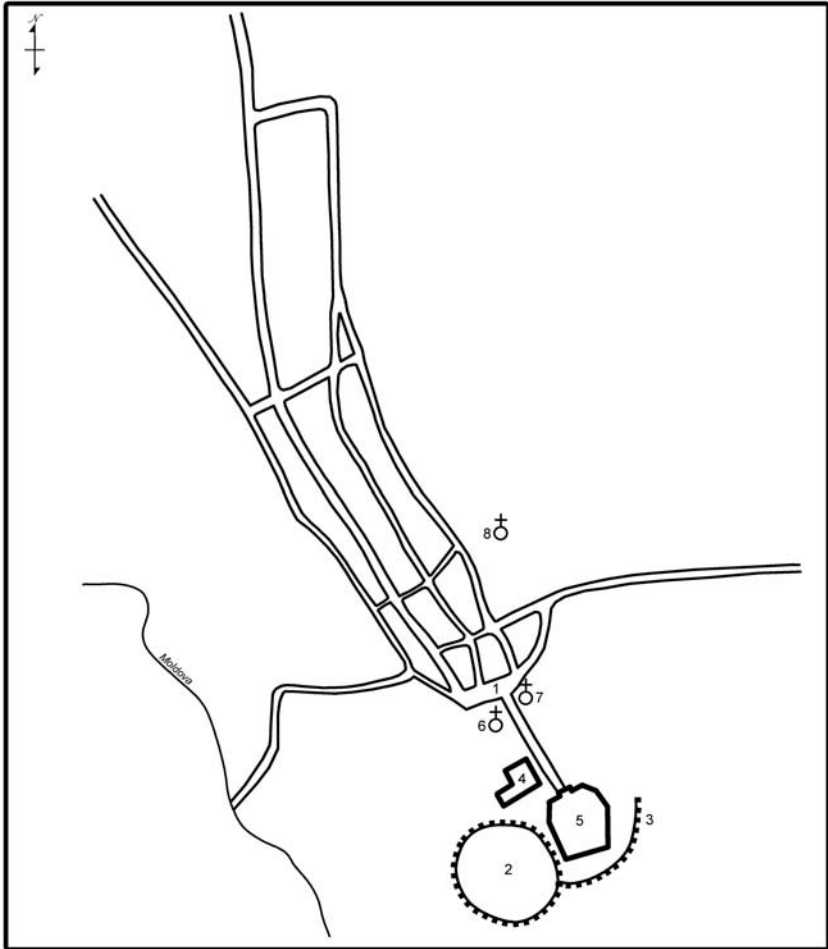
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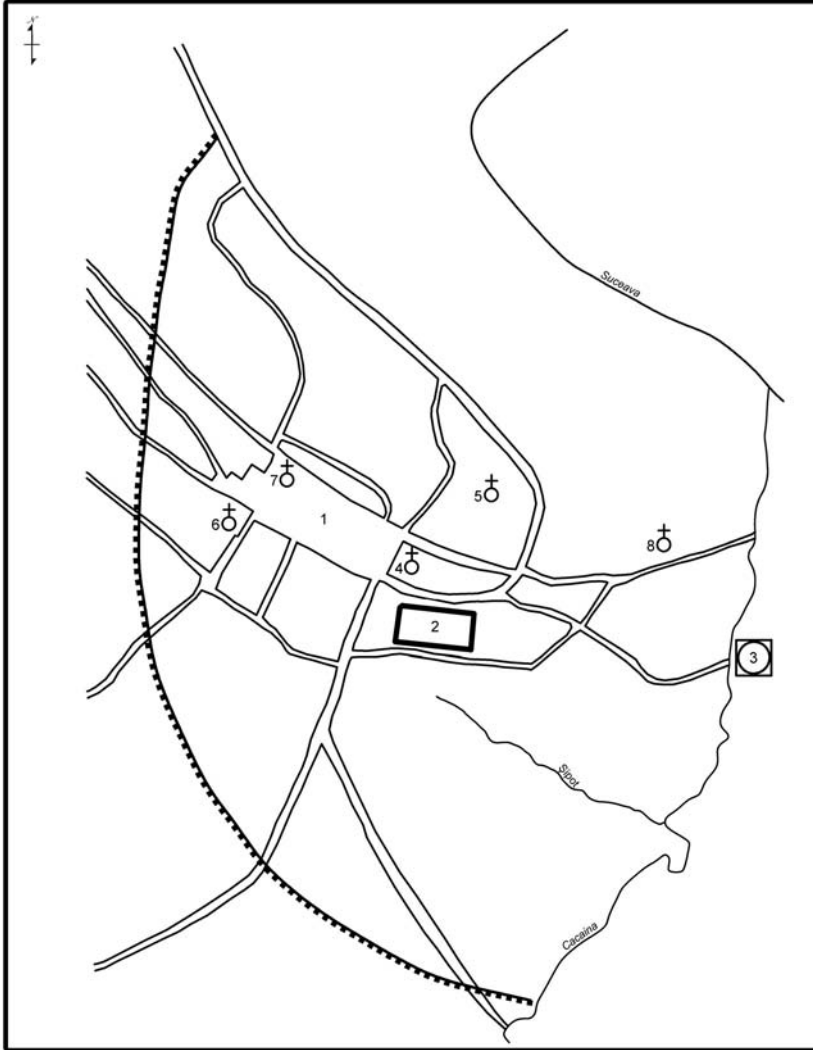


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## INTRODUCTION

### *The medieval town and its dilemmas*

This book is an examination of the emergence and evolution of medieval towns in the Romanian Principalities, from the 13th century and up to the final days of the 15th century. The medieval world cannot be fully understood without an exhaustive insight into the town as a whole, and all that it represented: a community of free, privileged citizens for whom trade and the manufacture of common or luxury items were a way of life. A work which would approach the various issues related to the structures of urban life in this side of Europe, and which would also review each region, with its specifics and its particular development, is conspicuously lacking. This is the challenge we would like to address in our work.

How do we define a town? This is an old but ever-present question, troubling historians all around the world. The question becomes even more intricate for scholars in the eastern areas of Europe, since towns located there looked or were organized in a more or less different fashion than towns in the western and southern regions of the continent. There are three main lines of interpretation that most researchers focus on: the economic, the legal, and the topographic one. Some historians believe that only the settlements undertaking active trade or manufacture can be seen as towns. Others rely on the “legal” standing of the town, a settlement which acted on a distinct set of privileges, defining the status of the community. The settlement also enjoyed a privilege, more or less extended. A third group of researchers associate urban centres in the Middle Ages with the presence of surrounding walls and a clear-cut layout.<sup>1</sup>

The closer we get to Eastern Europe and the Black Sea, the less do these principles apply, since few towns ever come to comply with

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<sup>1</sup> See Howard Clarke, Anngret Simms, “Towards a Comparative History of Urban Origins,” in *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century*, part II, BAR International Series, eds. H. B. Clarke and Anngret Simms, no. 255 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 669–703.



them. Some centres display a bustling trade life, but lack privileges and walls (the so-called “market towns” in Central Europe, the Eastern European *târgs*). Others have privileges (not as extensive as in the West), are engaged in the economic process, but have no walls, like the towns in Wallachia, Moldavia, or Serbia. However, there are also towns which rise to the standards mentioned above (the royal towns in Hungary, the privileged ones in Poland, etc.). If we were to go by the traditional definitions of the town and only look at the latter group, Central and Eastern Europe would present us with the lowest density of towns on the continent. However, the complexities of urban life go beyond established definitions.

*Demographically*, the town was a cluster of people outnumbering the ones in common villages. *Topographically*, we may note that, by and large, urban centres are located in places that favoured trade, around the castles of kings or noblemen, near crossroads, by river fords, etc. Some medieval towns rose atop Roman settlements, but their pattern of organization was in no way connected to the Antiquity. The *central marketplace*, with a more or less orderly outline, came into its own as a true magnet for trade, and had two purposes: the original, commercial one, and a second one, as the core of urban life, where the townspeople gathered (*agora*). In most cases, the marketplace had many buildings with a symbolic value: the *town hall*, the headquarters of the institution governing the town and ensuring it kept its autonomy, and the *town church*, where believers showed their faith. The town’s purposes obviously set it apart from the village. Its main purpose is still an economic one: a trade centre, but also a manufacture hub, since agricultural pursuits were only ancillary.<sup>2</sup> The political purpose stems from the town remaining a seat of power (a legal, administrative, or religious centre). Not only could its inhabitants manufacture or sell various goods, but they could also wield weapons, so the medieval armies also included corps of townspeople, often better equipped than peasants. The town also has a vital cultural purpose. Along with the Church, the town becomes the domain of the written word, since its inhabitants could not do without reading, writing, and counting in their work.<sup>3</sup> Many urban crafts were put to “cultural use,” since the

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Holt, Gervase Rosser, *The English Medieval Town. A Reader in English Urban History, 1200–1540* (London, 1990), pp. 3–4.

<sup>3</sup> Paul M. Hohenberg, Lynn Hollen Less, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 38–39.

craftsmen erected churches, cathedrals, and went on to print books. The development of the town also involved the birth and growth of specific lifestyles, as well as that of mentalities tied to a set of values. The townspeople embraced work more willingly, and restored it to its former glory for the late medieval society. The town community had a mixed social make-up, which brought together the wealthy upper layers, the patriciate (*majores*), who controlled the institutions, and the lower ones, the poor (*mediocres*). The two were set apart over time by two criteria that became the mainstay of this world: *influence* and *money*. All the above-mentioned features converge into one bottom line: the medieval town was “a multifunctional phenomenon.”<sup>4</sup>

All these aspects come into play as the modern historian attempts to define the medieval town. However, we must follow the medieval points of reference in our research, and this is why we will focus on the legal element. Nowadays, we may see a settlement with a large, economically active population and a market or industry as a town. However, the medieval person also valued the rights he enjoyed, since they granted him a certain status. Of the thousands of settlements present at any given point in the medieval world, the “privileged town” stands out.<sup>5</sup> Its inhabitant was a free man, without any masters, except maybe the king who had granted or acknowledged his privilege. In the case of towns, this document was not granted individually; its scope was the community, and it covered all the individuals making up that community. Where the contents were concerned, the more diverse the towns, the more varied the privileges. Their provisions vary greatly from one area to another. There were full privileges, like the ones in Italy or Germany, extended privileges, like in Poland or Hungary, but also limited ones, like those in Serbia, Wallachia or Moldavia. Historical climate led to more ample privileges in Central and Southern Europe, and more restricted ones towards the outer reaches. Therefore, to define a medieval settlement as a *town*, we must first identify its *privilege*.

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<sup>4</sup> A phrase used by G. Fasoli, “Città e storia delle città,” in *Topografia urbana e vita cittadina nell’alto medioevo in Occidente*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, no. 21, part 1 (Spoleto, 1974), pp. 19–23.

<sup>5</sup> North of the Alps, the first town to receive legal freedom and autonomy was Huy, near Liège. The townspeople redeemed their rights from the local bishop in 1066 (Edith Ennen, *The Medieval Town* (Amsterdam, 1979), p. 108).

In a large number of cases, the privilege was granted after the emergence of the settlement *per se*, and after it had reached a certain stage of economic and social development. In a minority of them, the town charter was issued when the settlement was created or shortly afterwards. We also cannot overlook a process which swayed the course of urbanization in Central and Eastern Europe: colonization. Economic and social reasons determined the kings, princes, dukes, or bishops in Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Wallachia, and Moldavia to provide incentive for or to accept the colonization of their domains by foreign settlers, better prepared and organized. This process followed a specific path, since the newcomers were lured by land, economic rights and legal liberties. The creation of new settlements, be they villages or towns, which abided by the so-called “German law,” is owed to them. This centuries-long process did not involve only foreigners, but locals as well, relocated as the new principles required. The rights received by settlers were the groundwork of the privilege, which was kept in its original form or was later extended.

The privilege charter was not preserved in many towns; the main culprits are various adversities, medieval or modern (the ravages of war and natural disasters). Even so, sources provide us with ample evidence to classify a certain settlement as a town. The presence of community-elected figures, who could try its members, issue decrees or draft documents they stamped by town seal is one instance of this. We must emphasize another point: the privilege was the product of a compromise between the central authority and the inhabitants. However, in Central and Eastern Europe, we believe that the royal or local authority was the focus of this compromise, and not the inhabitants. This was not a “communal movement” in the strictest sense of this phrase, but originated only in initiatives by townspeople in large centres, who struggled to gain rights. Since it had leverage in this situation, the royal authority was the one to regulate the status of towns. This ensured it larger income, better development for the kingdom (or the principality), and a political basis. Despite support from the king, the townspeople of these areas were never a social or political force to be reckoned with.

The further we travel east, the more difficult it becomes to note the inner workings of the town community, since sources are reluctant to tell us anything in this respect. There are hints that the townspeople acted as one, in defence of their rights, especially when it came to being tried by their own representatives or to using the town domain.

Another debate revolves around whether continuity between urban settlements in Antiquity and medieval ones existed. This matter is far from simple, and only archaeology can shed light on it. Research related to it has shown that, in some cases, there was some degree of habitation continuity (*Ruinenkontinuität*).<sup>6</sup> Even in the harshest days of the Middle Ages, Central-European or Balkan lands crossed by migrating peoples continued to be inhabited. If we come near, or even within the territory in the grasp of the former Roman Empire, we will notice that Roman camps, municipia, and colonies were located where modern-day towns stand. On many occasions, to found new settlements, the Romans took over the location of older settlements erected by previous inhabitants of the area (Celts, Dacians, etc.). Nonetheless, the towns continuously inhabited between the crumbling of the Roman structures and the emergence of medieval states are few in number. Most are in the Byzantine Empire and some in Italy, Gaul, and Spain. The repopulation of old towns, on the same spot or nearby, occurred only when the political climate became more stable, and new, more enduring states emerged. The major difference between them and the ones in Antiquity is that the former were organized differently and had other purposes.

This work will often make use of the phrase “pre-urban settlement.” This type of early urban settlements was often the subject of scholarly debate, since the terminology at work was not entirely consistent. Some preferred the phrase we have adopted, while others relied on “proto-towns,” “embryonic-towns,” or “incipient towns.”<sup>7</sup> There are slight differences between the four, since they instance the two perspectives on urban evolution, which set apart settlements with a specific economic and legal status or those with economic and administrative purposes. We have given preference to “pre-urban,” since it seems more in keeping with how we see the town, and we see it as an intricate, but many-sided whole. The pre-urban settlement is simply a settlement that was not a town, but had some of its features. Almost all later towns fall under this category in their stage of emergence. Still, not all settlements at one point in a pre-urban stage became towns. For

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<sup>6</sup> Even though Pannonia was affected by many migrations, Esztergom, Sopron and Szombathely in this land display a relative degree of habitation continuity (György Györfly, “Les débuts de l’évolution urbaine en Hongrie,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, X<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Université de Poitiers) vol. XII, no. 2 (1969), p. 130).

<sup>7</sup> Clarke, Simms, “Towards a Comparative History,” pp. 672–674.

some, the right conditions were missing, while for others, “luck” simply did not present itself. Even though the above statement is somewhat unorthodox, it captures a frequent occurrence in the Middle Ages. A fire, a disaster, an invasion followed by destruction or all these together could condemn an aspiring settlement to oblivion.

*The time and the place*

The political, social, and geographic scope of our research covers part of Central and Eastern Europe. We would prefer avoiding the long debate on the borders of this area (or notion), since it does not fall within the subject of this work.<sup>8</sup> The historical specifics of the area led to the rise of two principalities mostly populated by Romanians: Wallachia and Moldavia. The Romanians in Transylvania could not form a state, since this land came under the control of Hungarian kings relatively early, between 1000 and 1200. A voivodate endured here as a political and territorial unit, but it had a reduced autonomy. Compared to it, the two principalities had a vast autonomy, their leaders being virtually independent in matters of internal affairs. They even had right of life or death over their subjects. Even though the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia had pledged vassal fealty to the king of Hungary (the Moldavian one also made this pledge to the king of Poland), they had almost complete freedom in external affairs. The emergence of the Ottoman Empire gradually shifted the balance of power in the region. First of all, the rulers of Wallachia acknowledged the sovereignty of the sultan, before mid 15th century (the first tribute was officially paid in 1417). The Moldavian rulers followed suit afterwards (the first tribute was paid in 1456). Until the fall of Hungary, but also afterwards, the principalities played a very artful political game, which allowed them to keep their autonomy intact. The dependence on the Ottoman Empire heightened in the latter half of the 16th century and in the 17th. Even in the 18th century, when Ottoman domination was at its peak, Wallachia and Moldavia still had autonomy. The local political climate had a decisive influence on the emergence, evolution, and organization of towns. Migratory peoples took their

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<sup>8</sup> See Peter Burke, “Introduction: A Note on the Historiography of East-Central Europe,” in *East-Central Europe in Transition. From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Antoni Mazczak, Henryk Samsonowicz, Peter Burke (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1–5.

toll on Central, and especially Eastern Europe, arresting social and political structures in their development. This is why urbanization here lagged behind the similar process in Western Europe. It was only after this trend was somewhat mitigated that, after mid 13th century and in the 14th, local states coalesced, ensuring the stable climate required for the emergence of new towns. Despite being almost one century late, towns in the Romanian Principalities (and those in the northern Balkans) join those in Hungary and Poland in this side of Europe.

The 15th century is the prime period for medieval towns in the area, but this begins to change at the dawn of the dynamic 16th century. Towns in Serbia and Bulgaria had already come under Ottoman control, so urban centres in the Romanian Principalities would not be able to avoid the Eastern influence in politics, economy and society. More remarkable is the fact that towns here preserved their original, basic organization, for the two centuries to come.

We have chosen to preface the study of towns in the Principalities with a description of the emergence and evolution of towns in medieval Poland and Hungary, as well as of those south of the Danube. We have done so in order to more easily determine which elements were common, but also with methodology in mind, since the comparative approach has provided a more revealing insight into how towns in the Principalities came about. This work has not considered the more distant Byzantine Empire, Bohemia, or Austria, but they were mentioned every time the opportunity arose. On an urban level, they had a greatly diminished influence on the Romanian area, so we did not insist on them.

#### *Written sources and the issue of terminology*

When researching towns in the Romanian Principalities, we were faced with a difficulty common to all historians who ever took interest in this subject: the state of sources. In this respect, not only urban history, but the entire medieval history of the Romanians is not exactly in mint condition. The dawn of the Principalities is scarcely documented.

Chancelleries of the rulers in Wallachia and Moldavia came into existence in the 14th century. The first document issued by a ruler is dated 1351/1352 for the former country, and 1384, for the latter.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 11, doc. 2; A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

Few pre-1500 texts were preserved, severely hindering research into any historical process related to this period. The several hundred internal documents which survived in various archives have been collected by historians and published under two main collections: *Documente privind istoria României*, incomplete and without documents in their original language, and *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, almost complete and in keeping with all scientific standards.<sup>10</sup> A large number of other local collections or volumes fill in the array of written sources available. We took particular interest in volumes which include documents for certain towns: Câmpulung, Târgoviște, Iași, Suceava, Bârlad, or Lăpușna.<sup>11</sup> Internal documents, especially the official ones, are more accurate in their depiction of the structure of town communities and their relations with the ruler. They also provide details on the estates of the inhabitants or their pursuits. However, they only paint a fragmented picture of daily life, leaving our study with few hints to go by. This shortcoming would be compensated in the 17th century, when the preserved documents multiplied substantially. The language of choice for most documents in these times was Old Slavonic. Written Hungarian and German prevailed in towns with communities of this origin, and Romanian joins them after 1521.

Written sources outside the Principalities come in handy when considering politics, diplomacy, religion, and, most of all, economy. The

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<sup>10</sup> *Documente privind istoria României*. Series A, *Moldova*, B, *Țara Românească* (see also C, *Transilvania*) covers the 14th–17th centuries (until 1625). Volumes were published by a large team of historians, whose names were not however noted, the coordination being undertaken by Mihail Roller (Bucharest, 1951–1957). *Documenta Romaniae Historica* has the same series and began to be published by a large team of scholars in 1965. Up to now, only internal documents from 1351/1352–1580, 1593–1601, 1626–1636, have been published for Wallachia, while for Moldavia, 1384–1504, 1623–1636. The last few years continued the publication of volumes for the 16th century and for the time after 1636. From 1977 on, *Documenta Romaniae Historica* received a new series, D, which includes documents on the relations between Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. Only one volume has been published so far, covering 1222–1456.

<sup>11</sup> Ștefan Trâmbaciu, *Câmpulungul medieval în cincizeci de documente (1368–1800)* (Bucharest, 1997); George Potra, *Tezaurul documentar al județului Dâmbovița (1418–1800)* (Târgoviște, 1972); *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Iași*, vol. I, eds. Ioan Caproșu, Petronel Zahariuc (Iași, 1999); vol. II–X, ed. Ioan Caproșu (Iași, 2000–2007); *Din tezaurul documentar sucevean. Catalog de documente (1393–1849)*, ed. Vasile Gh. Miron et al. (Bucharest, 1983); *Suceava. File de istorie. Documente privitoare la istoria orașului, 1388–1918*, vol. I, eds. Vasile Gh. Miron et al. (Bucharest, 1989); Ioan Antonovici, *Documente bărlădene*, vol. I–IV (Bârlad, 1911–1924); Aurel V. Sava, *Documente privitoare la târgul și finutul Lăpușnei* (Bucharest, 1937). We have also used the extensive collections: N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. I–XXIII (Bucharest, 1901–1913), and Gh. Ghibănescu, *Surte și izvoade*, vol. I–XXIV (Iași, 1907–1926).

main collection we will therefore rely on is the so-called “The Hurmuzachi Documents,” which mainly published documents extracted from the archives in Hungary, Austria, or Poland.<sup>12</sup> The commercial agreements concluded by the Moldavian rulers and the Polish and Hungarian kings were published by Mihai Costăchescu and Ioan Bogdan.<sup>13</sup> Some of the customs records for Transylvanian towns were also kept, and the towns in the Principalities had close trade relations with them. They include valuable data on the merchandise exchanged by the two parties, the amount, customs taxes, the name and the origin of merchants engaged in trade, etc. They have been published over a hundred years ago by Grigore Tocilescu, Ioan Bogdan, Silviu Dragomir and others.<sup>14</sup> Last but not least, documents in the Italian archives of Vatican, Genoa, and Venice are of particular importance, and an ever-growing number of Romanian and foreign historians have begun focusing on them.<sup>15</sup>

Narrative sources complete this picture with chronicles or accounts of travels. The oldest chronicles remaining are those in Moldavia, written in Old Slavonic in the ruler’s residence or in the monastery of Putna. Their best edition is the one published by Ioan Bogdan and

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<sup>12</sup> *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki*. This book focuses on volumes with medieval documents, published in Bucharest by N. Densușianu, I. Slavici, N. Iorga and Ioan Bogdan between 1876 and 1913. Of note are also Nicolae Iorga, *Acle și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. I–III (Bucharest, 1895–1897); N. Iorga, *Relațiile economice ale țărilor noastre cu Lembergul*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1900).

<sup>13</sup> M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Iași 1932); Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1913); Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan voievod (1504–1517)* (Bucharest, 1940); Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod (1517–1527)* (Bucharest, 1943).

<sup>14</sup> *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, vol. I–III (Brașov, 1886–1896); *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der Sächsischen Nation*, vol. I (Sibiu, 1880); Ioan Bogdan, *Documente și regeste privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Ungaria în secolele XV–XVI* (Bucharest, 1902); Ioan Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Țara Ungurească în secolele XV–XVI*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1905); Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiu în secolul XV și XVI* (Bucharest, 1927); Grigore Tocilescu, *534 documente istorice slavo-române din Țara Românească și Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul (1346–1603)* (Bucharest, 1931).

<sup>15</sup> I. C. Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1913); Ștefan Pascu, *Contribuții documentare la istoria românilor în sec. XIII și XIV* (Sibiu, 1944); G. Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360–1361)* (Genova, 1971); Michel Balard, *Gènes et l’outre mer*, tom I, *Les Actes de Caffà du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto, 1289–1290*; tom II, *Actes de Kilia du notaire Antonio di Ponzò, 1360* (Paris and New York, 1973–1980).



revised by Petre P. Panaitescu in 1959.<sup>16</sup> They are completed by the first chronicles to be written in Romanian in the 17th century or at the turn of the next one by Grigore Ureche (kept via copyists and intermediaries), Miron Costin and Ion Neculce,<sup>17</sup> as well as the first scholarly work on the history of Moldavia, that we owe to Dimitrie Cantemir.<sup>18</sup> Where Wallachia is concerned, no medieval official chronicle was kept. It is assumed that bits of these chronicles were adopted in several 17th century *Histories* and kept in various versions.<sup>19</sup> Internal chronicles are significant in themselves, since they shed new light on the emergence of towns, and from a different angle than that of official records. Hagiographies or monastery histories are only secondary, since they only relate small details on towns.<sup>20</sup> The literature from abroad is vast in this respect. The oldest accounts of Romanians come from histories written by scholars in Hungary, Poland, Russia, the Byzantine or the Ottoman Empire.<sup>21</sup> But while towns are only incidentally mentioned in these works, the most valuable narrative sources on urban life in Romanian-inhabited land are traveller's journals. Most of the travellers who arrived in or crossed the Principalities came from an urban

<sup>16</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1959).

<sup>17</sup> Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958); Miron Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei, Cronica polonă, Poema polonă and De neamul moldovenilor*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958); Ion Neculce, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, 2nd ed. by Iorgu Iordan (Bucharest, 1959) and *O samă de cuvinte*, ed. Gabriel Ștrempel (Bucharest, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea stării de odinioară și de astăzi a Moldovei*, vol. II, eds. Dan Slușanschi, Valentina Eșanu, Andrei Eșanu (Bucharest, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești, 1290–1690. Letopisețul Cantacuzinesc*, eds. C. Grecescu, D. Simionescu (Bucharest, 1960); *Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești de Radu Popescu vornicul*, ed. Constantin Grecescu (Bucharest, 1963); Virgil Căndea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești (1292–1664) în versiunea arabă a lui Macarie Zaim," *SRDI*, vol. XXIII, no. 4 (1970), pp. 673–692.

<sup>20</sup> *Viața preacuviosului Nicodim sfințitul*, ed. Ghenadie Enăceanu (Bucharest, 1883); *Viața Sfântului Nifon*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1944); *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor din Târgoviște*, in B. P. Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică a României*, tom I, part II (Bucharest, 1865), pp. 46–54; George Georgescu, "Cronica latină a Râmnicului din 1764," *Verbum* (Bucharest) vol. III–IV (1992–1993), pp. 247–254; George Georgescu, "Cronica franciscanilor din 1764, prima istorie a orașului Câmpulung," *Verbum* (Bucharest) vol. V (1994), pp. 334–355.

<sup>21</sup> *Carmen miserabile, Descriptio Europae Orientalis or Oesterreichische Reimchronik* in *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. II–III, V, VII, ed. G. Popa-Lisseanu (Bucharest, 1934–1935); *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi starșego i mladșego izvodov*, eds. A. N. Nasonov, M. N. Tihomirov (Moscow, 1950); Laonic Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958); *Cronici turcești privind țările române*, vol. I, eds. M. Guboglu, Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966).

environment, so they provided useful, albeit late accounts (especially from the 15th–17th centuries). All this literature has been compiled into a collection called *Călători străini despre țările române*, with the first five volumes being of special interest to us.<sup>22</sup> We have also relied on epigraphy and cartography, where they proved useful.<sup>23</sup>

Written sources, and especially official documents, raise a whole range of problems. Terminology is the most distressing of them, since it invites confusion. One of the reasons is the diversity of medieval terminology. It varies across chancelleries and the language used within them. Since the languages used in worship became official languages in themselves, the Byzantine area used Greek, the Slav and the Romanian one, Old Slavonic, while the rest of Europe was the province of Latin. In the early Middle Ages, the kingdoms which followed in the West after the Roman Empire kept a Roman urban terminology: *municipium*, *territorium*. *Civitas* was also used in reference to towns that were also bishop's sees. The last term was also used in the later days of the Middle Ages and resulted in the French *cit *, the Spanish *ciudad* or English *city*. As we leave the scope of influence of the once-mighty Roman Empire, urban terminology becomes infused with local terms from Old German, Slavonic or Hungarian. Therefore, along with *oppidum* and *foro*, the terms defining the pre-urban stage or the simple trading post status of some settlements are complemented by *trg / targ* or *v s rhely*. *Castellum*, but also *burgus*, *gorod* and *v r* are used to indicate a fortified settlement. *Burgus* endured through the Middle Ages, and it became widespread under many regional forms: Germ. *burg / purg*, En. *borough*, It. *borgo*, Sp. *burgo*, Fr. *bourg*, *faubourg*; the inhabitants in a *burgus* were: *burgensis*, *B rger*, *purgari*, etc. The eastern area of Europe preferred the Old Slavonic *gorod* and the Hungarian *v r*. The former displayed some local variations: Rus. *gorod*, Pol. *gr d*, South-Slavonic *grad* and Cz. *hrad*. As *v ros*, initially meaning “suburbs,” the latter was adopted by the Southern Slavs, the Albanians, entered Modern Greek

<sup>22</sup> *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. I–V (Bucharest, 1968–1973). Marco Bandini, *Codex. Vizitarea generală a tuturor bisericilor catolice de rit roman din Provincia Moldova, 1646–1648*, ed. Traian Diaconescu (Iași, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> N. Iorga, *Inscripții din bisericile Rom niei*, vol. I–II (Bucharest, 1905–1908). *Inscripțiile medievale ale Rom niei. Orașul București*, vol. I, ed. Alexandru Elian (Bucharest, 1965); *Il mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, vol. I–II, eds. Tullia Gasparini Leporace, Roberto Almagia (Roma, 1956); *The Portolan Chart of Angellino de Dalorto, MCCXXV*, ed. Arthur R. Hinks (London, 1929); *Sea Charts of the Early Explorers, 13th to 17th Century*, eds. Michel Mollat et al. (Fribourg, 1984).

and found its way into Romanian as *oraș*. These terms are also complemented by: *urbs*, *villa*, *portus*, *suburbium*, as well as the local variants of *podgradije*, *town*, *wik*, *Stadt*, *miasto*, etc.<sup>24</sup>

A focused study of local documents allows us to probe the meanings of terms used to define the staples of life in towns. Still, some terms raise some disturbing issues when it comes to translating them into English. One such term is *târg*, with a two-fold meaning in Romanian: pre-urban settlement, a marketplace in town, permanent or temporary (a fair), and even a business. To complicate the matter further, Moldavian official documents assign it the meaning of “town”. Translating it by an appropriate English term (for instance, “market town,” “marketplace,” “town”) would confuse the readers, so we preferred rendering it in its original form of *târg*. However, we did keep it only in its main meaning of “pre-urban settlement,” using similar English terms for all its other meanings (marketplace, fair, town). We took the same stance to words describing institutions specific to the town community. The elected representative for the townspeople bears different names in the two Principalities, so, in the same vein, we kept the original name (*județ* in Wallachia, *șoltuz* or *voit* in Moldavia). This was also the case with designations for officials (*pârcălab*, *vornic*), whose exact English counterpart, describing their scope of authority, is hard to find. Another word which generates issues in translation is *curte*. Its primary meaning is that of a main seat for the ruler and his family. The *curte* had both an aulic, and a military purpose, since in most cases it was fortified. In this book, we have attempted to adapt English words to define the *curte*, naturally taking into account the local status of town residences. Those in capital-towns (Argeș, Târgoviște, Suceava) were complex buildings, vast, true palaces, while those in smaller towns were larger, fortified houses. In this case, we believe that keeping the original *curte* would have lead to confusion with *court*, which has multiple meanings in English. One final matter that begs clarification is a social one: in areas inhabited by Romanians, and in Bulgaria and Russia, the noble is called a *boier* or *boiar*. As he owned land and was tied to the ruler by fealty, the *boier* in the Romanian Principalities is partly akin to the nobles in the rest of Europe. Even so, he does display some

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<sup>24</sup> Ennen, *The Medieval Town*, pp. 46–47; David Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City from Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century* (London, 1997), pp. 90–91; Györfly, “Les débuts de l’évolution urbaine,” p. 134.

peculiar features, which determine us to avoid calling him a *noble*, but rather a *boyar*, a word which came into use in academic literature (in the English one as well). We will dwell on these terms at certain points throughout the book, and also note them in the glossary at the end.

### *Archaeology*

Archaeological excavations could provide valuable information, as they did for many western towns, but Wallachia and Moldavia had only few thorough archaeological initiatives. Excavations were performed mostly in large towns, where the old residences of the ruler and the churches within them were studied: Bucharest, Târgoviște, Câmpulung, Floci (for Wallachia), Iași, Suceava, Baia, Siret, Bacău, Troțuș and Adjud (for Moldavia). Historical centres in towns were the secondary target of archaeologists, and were researched only during restoration work or, as it was more often the case, discoveries were brought along by the massive demolitions of the Communist regime in the 1980s. This is why most archaeological data on old towns stems from the so-called “salvation excavations.”

The ones who put to adequate use archaeological findings in urban research include Panait I. Panait, N. Constantinescu, Gh. I. Cantacuzino, and Anca Păunescu for Wallachia,<sup>25</sup> Vasile Neamțu, Al. Andronic, Mircea D. Matei, Al. Artimon, Victor Spinei, and Stela Cheptea for

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<sup>25</sup> Panait I. Panait, “Începuturile orașului București în lumina cercetărilor arheologice,” *BMIM*, vol. V (1967), pp. 7–24; Panait I. Panait, “Cetatea Bucureștilor în secolele XIV–XV,” *RM*, vol. IV (1969), pp. 310–318; Panait I. Panait, “Evoluția perimetrului Curții Vechi în lumina descoperirilor arheologice (sec. XVI–XVIII),” *BMIM*, vol. VIII (1971), pp. 81–88; N. Constantinescu, “Note arheologice și istorice asupra curții feudale de la Târgșor (sec. XV–XVII),” *SCIV*, vol. XX, no. 1 (1969), pp. 83–100; N. Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeș (1200–1400). Asupra începuturilor Țării Românești* (Bucharest, 1984); Nicolae Constantinescu, “Cercetări arheologice de la curtea domnească din Târgoviște,” in *Documente recent descoperite și informații arheologice* (Bucharest, 1987), pp. 71–78; Gh. I. Cantacuzino et al. “Principalele rezultate ale cercetărilor arheologice la ansamblul fostei curți domnești din Câmpulung din anii 1975–1977,” *Studii și comunicări* (Câmpulung-Muscel) 1981, pp. 23–29; Gh. I. Cantacuzino, P. Diaconescu, G. Mihăescu, *Cercetările arheologice în zona centrală a orașului Târgoviște*, *MCA* (Bucharest, 1983), pp. 508–512; *MCA* (Bucharest, 1986), pp. 291–293; Gh. I. Cantacuzino, *Cetăți medievale din Țara Românească în secolele XIII–XVI*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 2001); Anca Păunescu, *Orașul Floci: un oraș dispărut din Muntenia medievală* (Târgoviște, 2005).

Moldavia, to mention but a few of them.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, various reasons led to many of their discoveries to remain unpublished to this day or to be transmitted to the academia long after they were undertaken.

There is an obvious lack of solid collaboration between historians and archaeologists when it comes to urban history. Some archaeologists believe a settlement should combine several features (provided by material discoveries) to be seen as a town, while most historians focus on other features (provided by documents). Archaeologists also tend to see towns as mainly involved in manufacture, while historians believe they relied mostly on trade.<sup>27</sup> The precarious state of sources should bring both parties together, into a comparative approach that would shed light on the early days and evolution of towns. We must turn to the surrounding areas to see the lines along which this process evolved, since the Romanian-inhabited territory was not isolated, but had ties abroad. Unfortunately, few Romanian researchers were able to reconcile the various types of sources in order to come up with a more accurate picture of the urbanization.

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<sup>26</sup> Vasile Neamțu, Eugenia Neamțu, Stela Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia în secolele XIV–XVII*, vol. I–II (Iași, 1980–1984); Vasile Neamțu, *Istoria orașului medieval Baia (Civitas Moldaviensis)* (Iași, 1997); Al. Andronic, *Iașii până la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea: Geneză și evoluție* (Iași, 1986); Mircea D. Matei, *Contribuții arheologice la istoria orașului Suceava* (Bucharest, 1963); Mircea D. Matei, *Mircea D. Matei, Civilizație urbană medievală românească. Contribuții (Suceava până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)* (Bucharest, 1989); Mircea D. Matei, “Câteva considerații pe marginea începuturilor orașului Siret, în lumina celor mai recente descoperiri arheologice,” *RMMMIA*, vol. XVII, no. 2 (1986), pp. 19–25; Mircea D. Matei, Lucian Chițescu, *Cetatea de pământ de la Bârlad. Monografie arheologică* (Târgoviște, 2002); Alexandru Artimon, *Civilizația medievală urbană din secolele XIV–XVII (Bacău, Tg. Trotuș, Adjud)* (Iași, 1998); Alexandru, Artimon, *Orașul medieval Trotuș în secolele XIV–XVII. Geneză și evoluție* (Bacău, 2003); Victor Spinei, “Începuturile vieții urbane la Bârlad și problema berladnicilor,” *AIIAI*, vol. XVI (1979), pp. 271–293; Victor Spinei, Elena Gherman, “Șantierul arheologic Siret (1993),” *AM*, vol. 18 (1995), pp. 229–250; Stela Cheptea, *Un oraș medieval: Hârlău* (Iași, 2000); Stela Cheptea, *Șase veacuri de istorie*, in *Catedrala romano-catolică Iași*, ed. Dănuț Doboș (Iași, 2005), pp. 9–61.

<sup>27</sup> See Mircea D. Matei, *Geneză și evoluție urbană în Moldova și Țara Românească până în secolul al XVII-lea* (Iași, 1997), pp. 112–118; P. P. Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale în Principatele Române,” in *Interpretări românești*, 2nd ed. by Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria-Magdalena Székely (Bucharest, 1994), pp. 154–158.

*Historiography and interpretations*

The dawn of the Principalities, as local states more or less dependent on neighbouring powers (Hungary, Poland, the Ottoman Empire), is obscured by the passage of time. The unsatisfactory sources only allow for theorization upon this period, and theories are so numerous, that they often baffle readers who are unfamiliar with the region's history. This is why we attempted to bring the major, most adhered-to theories into one common strand. However, our opinions, which originate in our view of sources, have led us to emphasize the more plausible interpretations. Almost all historians studying this period were Romanian, indicating the little interest generated by the history of the Principalities abroad. The reasons are various. Patriotism aside, the history of Romanians has a local character, and was often studied by foreign historians as an appendix to the history of neighbouring powers, on whom they were more or less dependent. Whereas pre-Second World War Romanian historians such as Nicolae Iorga or Gh. I Brătianu were well immersed in European historiography, the advent of Communism plunged historical research into a Marxist and nationalist trend, decreasing even further its appeal abroad. This brings us back to the state of sources. Internal documents were inconsistently published, sometimes with errors or great delays, and archaeological excavations were mostly dedicated to matters which suited the Communist regime (proving the continuity of Romanian occupation of this land), with medieval history being pushed into the background. All these took their toll: a chronic obliviousness to Romanian medieval history in Europe or the USA.<sup>28</sup> Few major foreign researchers have focused on Romanian history in the past 50 years, and most were interested in modern or contemporary history: Keith Hitchins, Denis Delentant etc.<sup>29</sup> A tentative change began to manifest itself after 1989, but only

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<sup>28</sup> The towns and the history of the Romanian Principalities are only accidentally mentioned even in the great works of medieval history. On the map of European towns in the Late Middle Ages, in the "Urban Europe" chapter written by Barrie Dobson, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VII, ed. Christopher Allmand (Cambridge, New York, 1995), pp. 122–123, Lviv and Kraków are the last towns in Europe. Hungary, the Romanian Principalities, Lithuania or the south-Danubian countries were not present on this map.

<sup>29</sup> Keith Hitchins, *A Nation Discovered: Romanian Intellectuals in Transylvania and the Idea of Nation, 1700–1848* (Bucharest, 1999); Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andreiu Saguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846–1873* (Cambridge, 1977); Dennis

because many Romanian students left their country to study or perform research, and some chose subjects in Romanian history. These are the reasons why a researcher interested in any subject related to this area of Europe has to either go by the few works published in widely spoken languages or to learn Romanian. Our book comes to cover this information gap, hoping to spark more interest for what is an otherwise rich and sometimes surprising history.

We will not attempt to describe extensively the historiography of towns in the Romanian Principalities, since this would require a whole, separate work. As pointed out above, the historian interested in this issue is faced with several difficulties. There are scarcely any valuable, in-depth works on towns, and coherent monographs are hard to come by. A series of articles in dedicated journals partly make up for these shortcomings. Urban history was a topic of interest even before the Second World War, but most of the works of the time were written either under the sway of passion for the places described, or by amateurs. After 1947, research into the past history of towns was no priority, since their origin and urban evolution were rapidly subsumed to the paradigm of materialist-scientific views of the time. A change becomes noticeable after 1989, but it is by no means drastic. The appearance of the “*Historia Urbana*” journal and of the Commission for the History of Towns of the Romanian Academy has somewhat channelled the efforts to reclaim town history, but the lack of scholars in the field is still manifest. Also, some researchers naturally turned to fields largely ignored or hindered in Communist times (genealogy, anthropology, history of mentalities, etc.) and left towns aside.

In present-day Romania, the only region which attracted more historical interest as such was Transylvania. Towns established there enjoyed an institutional status specific to Central Europe, guaranteed by the Hungarian kings and implemented by and for German colonists, who began to settle in Transylvania in the mid 12th century. Recent research by Thomas Nagler, Otto Dahinten, Paul Niedermaier, Eniko Rusz Fogarasi, as well as several collections of studies, showed how closely related in structure were Transylvanian towns to those in Central Europe.<sup>30</sup> As for the towns in Wallachia and Moldavia, sev-

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Deletant, *Ceaușescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989* (Armonk, 1995); Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948–1965* (New York, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Nagler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1992); Otto Dahinten, *Geschichte der Stadt Bistritz in Siebenbürgen* (Köln, Vien, 1988); Paul Nieder-

eral factors contributed to the existence of a different status. Unlike Transylvania, the two principalities based their political institutions on the Byzantine model, an initiative which baffled local historians. Where towns were concerned, they identified in sources elements which are obviously linked to the structures of Central Europe; however, they were not able to provide a consistent explanation on how these elements were introduced and how they ascribed specific features to towns in the region. Conflicting information in sources on towns south and east of the Carpathian Mountains has determined scholars to rally under two major lines of interpretation when considering the emergence and the organization of urban centers: 1. towns created as predominantly commercial centers thanks to the contribution of social elements of foreign origin; 2. towns arising as the medieval Romanian society reached a new stage in its development, the “division of labour”, namely the separation of crafts and agriculture. The latter perspective sees towns as manufacturing, rather than trade centers.

Advocates of the former point of view were particularly vocal during the interwar period, when the vast majority of scholars claimed that towns in the Romanian medieval Principalities were simply the result of economic and political influences from Central Europe. It was assumed that the vector for these influences were foreign colonists, who settled south and east of the Carpathian Mountains. The emergence of towns would have occurred before or at the same time as the very rise of the Romanian Principalities as medieval states. A. D. Xenopol, one of the first outstanding Romanian historians, emphasized the role of Saxons colonizing towns such as Baia or Câmpulung, where they had allegedly brought institutions from Transylvania or Poland. Xenopol’s argument was at least in part based on the fact that the local names for the judge and the members of the town council (*șoltuz, pârgari*) in both Wallachia and Moldavia were of German origin.<sup>31</sup> Nicolae Iorga, a self-declared supporter of the theory of the foreign origin of Romanian towns, approached the issue in similar

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maier, *Der Mittelalterliche Städtebau in Siebenbürgen, im Banat und im Kreischgebiet* (Heidelberg, 1996); Enikő Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile și indatoririle orașelor din Transilvania voievodală* (Cluj-Napoca, 2003); *Die Mittelalterliche Städtebildung im Südöstlichen Europa*, ed. Heinz Stooß (Köln, Wien, 1977); *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, ed. Paul Philippi (Köln, Wien, 1984).

<sup>31</sup> A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. III (Bucharest, 1914), pp. 250–252.



terms: "We are nowadays certain that our towns had not been established by Romanians."<sup>32</sup>

Iorga believed that, together with foreign colonists, the trade routes also played a major part in the rise of local towns across the Romanian Principalities, an idea later developed by Gh. I. Brătianu. According to such views, the commercial interests of European powers paved the way for the emergence of towns, since routes could allow for free and thriving trade only under political protection. Unlike Iorga, Brătianu was more reluctant in supporting the foreign origin theory.<sup>33</sup> Iorga's ideas were further developed by I. Hurdubețiu<sup>34</sup> and Petre P. Panaitescu. The latter's contribution is especially significant in this respect, since Panaitescu radically changed his views following the advent of the Communist regime. To a valuable collection of studies published in 1947, he added a new paper reflecting the ideas of the interwar school of thought. In his study, the author emphasizes the role of foreign colonists in promoting trade in emerging towns before the rise of the Romanian Principalities.<sup>35</sup> Interwar historiographic views maintained that, with the support of the king of Hungary or that of rulers of the Romanian Principalities, foreign colonists have arrived to the regions south and east of the Carpathian Mountains, laying the foundations for some of the oldest towns in the country. They introduced elements of administrative, legal and economic organization specific to Central Europe. To a certain extent, this theory was also tackled by Emil Vîrtosu, Emil Lăzărescu and D. Ciurea, who put their ideas to print after the war. Vîrtosu, a specialist in sigillography, relied on the evidence of seals for the towns of Câmpulung, Baia and Roman, all of which had their legend written in Latin. Vîrtosu believed that seals, together with the institutional layout of towns adopting a Western pattern, would substantially reinforce the role of Saxon colonists in the making of the old urban centers.<sup>36</sup> Lăzărescu focused on studying the oldest town of Wallachia, Câmpulung. A tombstone dating back to

<sup>32</sup> N. Iorga, *Negoțul și meșteșugurile în trecutul românesc*, ed. Georgeta Penelea (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 83–84; N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, 2nd ed. by Victor Spinei (Bucharest, 1993), pp. 137–139.

<sup>33</sup> Gh. I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă* (Bucharest, 1935), p. 123; see also Gh. I. Brătianu, *Marea Neagră de la origini până la cucerirea otomană*, ed. Victor Spinei (Iași, 1999), pp. 73–75.

<sup>34</sup> I. Hurdubețiu, *Din trecutul catolicilor la Câmpulung Muscel* (Câmpulung, 1941), pp. 1–7.

<sup>35</sup> Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale," pp. 141–149.

<sup>36</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, "Din sigilografia Moldovei și Țării Românești," in DIR, *Introducere*, vol. II, pp. 437–501.

1300 mentions a certain *comes Laurentius de Longo Campo*, a character that caused much controversy, especially when it came to his social and political status. Lăzărescu believed that the *comes* was an agent of the king of Hungary, a political and military ruler of the town, who would later come under the control of the voivode of Wallachia.<sup>37</sup> One final theory sees D. Ciurea follow in the steps of Brătianu and attributing the foundation of towns in Moldavia to the commercial development of the region east of the Carpathians, also motivated by the interest that wealthier neighboring states, such as Hungary and Poland, displayed in extending their commercial relations towards the Danube and the Black Sea.<sup>38</sup>

After the Second World War, Marxist interpretations were introduced to the debate under the new political circumstances of the Soviet occupation and the dawn of a political regime approved and controlled by the Soviet Union. As a consequence, Romanian historians were expected to draw their inspiration from Soviet historians, whose fundamental thesis was that the Middle Ages were an age fraught with feudal dissolution and intense class struggle. The idea that medieval towns had a foreign origin was apparently unacceptable to the ever-growing nationalist bias of the Romanian Communists. Therefore, some historians embraced the new thesis of a specifically Romanian social evolution. They shifted the emphasis to the social division of labor, stressing the importance of crafts in towns, the “crystallization of feudal relations” and class struggle, with the urban phenomenon being seen as a native one, subjected to only a few influences from abroad. Championed by Petre P. Panaitescu, this line of interpretation was also adopted by Nicolae Grigoraș, Ștefan Olteanu, Constantin C. Giurescu, Constantin Șerban, Mircea D. Matei and others. The first one took a middle way in the debate, as illustrated by the chapter on towns published in his work in *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova* (1957).<sup>39</sup> He then radically changed his position for the *Introducere la istoria culturii românești*, published in 1969. No longer interested in

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<sup>37</sup> Emil Lăzărescu, “Despre piatra de mormânt a comitelui Laurențiu și câteva probleme arheologice și istorice în legătură cu ea,” *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, vol. IV, no. 1–2 (1957), pp. 124–126; see also Pavel Binder, “Din nou despre “comes Laurentius de Longo Campo,”” *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, series *Artă plastică*, vol. XXII, no. 1 (1975), pp. 186–187.

<sup>38</sup> D. Ciurea, “Noi contribuții privind orașele și târgurile din Moldova în secolele XIV–XIX,” *AIIAI*, vol. VII (1970), pp. 22–23.

<sup>39</sup> V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova* (sec. XIV–XVII) (Bucharest, 1957), pp. 413–444.

*communes*, he now postulated the existence of *valley* (or *river*) *market-towns* and *town communities* (so-called “orașe-obști”). The former were local political and economic centers, while the latter were supposedly urban forms of organization derived from rural social structures. “Orașele-obști” were “a specifically Romanian creation, a Romanian solution to the development of urban life in medieval Europe.” There is however very little evidence to substantiate Panaitescu’s theory, the only urban community regarding itself as *obște* being that of Câmpulung, and that only at a late date, namely in the 17th century. Even though he had advanced the new theory, Panaitescu also promoted some of his older ideas at the same time. He claimed that trade was a factor of utmost importance in the rise of the medieval towns, since foreign settlers establishing themselves in towns in the Principalities maintained relations with Transylvania. Panaitescu also saw the rise of medieval towns as playing “the cultural role of promoting social freedom.” In Panaitescu’s opinion, towns stood out as hotbeds of innovation, the main factor behind the “opening up of economic relations with Europe as a whole.” This medley of ideas, combining faith in the “Romanian” and “rural” origin of towns with the notion of “social freedom” only created more theoretical confusion and furthered debate, instead of advancing clarity and limpid expression.<sup>40</sup>

Until the late 1960s, no major work was published on medieval towns, except monographs dedicated to individual urban centers. For most historians, research into the past history of towns was a marginal field, over which political, economic or social history had the upper hand. The first work of synthesis on towns in Moldavia and Wallachia was published by Constantin C. Giurescu in 1967. Giurescu had already approached the topic in his *Istoria românilor*, published in several editions in the 1930s. While his interwar position on the issue could be best described as neutral (he, among other things, pointed out the role of Saxon, Hungarian, and Armenian tradesmen),<sup>41</sup> Giurescu now decided to align himself to the official position claiming a local origin for all towns in the Romanian Principalities. Indeed, Giurescu’s arguments are solid, especially in regards to the economic and political factors having a crucial significance for the rise of towns in Mol-

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<sup>40</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii românești. Problemele istoriografiei române*, 2nd ed. by Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 263–275.

<sup>41</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, ed. Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 299–325.

davia (the only region that he studied). Moldavian towns supposedly evolved from villages, centers of regions with a higher concentration of settlements, which became small towns and then served as seats for local rulers.<sup>42</sup> The final shift to urban centers with a specific organization occurred as a result of the participation in the local and international trade, and due to the creation of the medieval state. Critics of Giurescu's work accused him of placing the rise of medieval towns in Moldavia too early on the timeline. According to him, urban centers had already come into being by 1350, at the time the principality of Moldavia came into being as well, but this idea found no support in archaeological evidence.<sup>43</sup> So far, excavations disproved Giurescu's statements. However, they did point to a relatively simultaneous development of towns and state structures in both Moldavia and Wallachia. The 1300s were a period of both urbanization and state emergence. Despite all its weaknesses and ideological bias in favor of the tenets of national Communism, Giurescu's monograph is one of the most rigorous scientific ventures in the Romanian urban history of the past few decades.

Most prominent among scholars making extensive use of the archaeological evidence is Mircea D. Matei, who, unlike some of his fellow historians, worked out a theory of urban development, instead of just publishing and describing archaeological findings. Matei offered a synthesis of his views in a book published in 1997. After placing the local urban phenomenon within the European context, he insisted upon a set of specifically Romanian conditions (demographic, geographic, political, and social), which according to him could explain the rise of medieval towns. He acknowledged the existence of foreign settlers coming from across the Carpathian Mountains in search of economic opportunities, whom Matei saw as the heralds of new forms of civilization.<sup>44</sup> However, Mircea D. Matei denies the existence of any privileges for towns and instead excessively emphasizes the importance of manufacturing in the urban economy.

My own dissertation represents the most recent contribution to the debate surrounding the medieval towns in Wallachia. My basic thesis is that political factors did not outweigh economic considerations in the

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<sup>42</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 74–77.

<sup>43</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 70–82.

<sup>44</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, p. 250.

rise of medieval towns. Local residences of rulers existing before the rise of medieval states were able to draw around them social groups with various professions and multiple ethnic origins, their members being traders, as well as craftsmen, and Romanian, as well as foreign. The first pre-urban settlements emerged against this backdrop before 1300. The colonists were the ones to introduce most political and administrative institutions, as evidenced by several specialized terms, all of German origin, which endured well into the modern period. Members of the urban elite were, in the oldest towns, chosen from among Saxons, Hungarians and Armenians; Romanians were not excluded, but they, together with Greeks rose to economic prominence only after 1500. Privileges obtained were the groundwork for town communities to follow a Central-European model of organization, their autonomy being limited by the authority of princely representatives. I also attempted to identify elements in the process of *locatio*, of towns being established following a well-determined layout, on the basis of topographical studies.<sup>45</sup>

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This is the research level that will serve as a starting point in our work. Despite having met many difficulties, we hope this work will open up a new perspective on a neglected subject. Our analysis runs through three large parts. The first one will lead us into the political, economic, and urban climate in Central and Eastern Europe. We will review the emergence and evolution of Polish and Hungarian towns, as well as of those in the vast and varied south-Danubian land, until 1500. It is on them that our understanding of similar processes in the Principalities hinges, and since our approach follows a timeline, we will begin with Wallachia, and then focus on Moldavia. In some cases, we have gone beyond the year 1500, but only where we were presented with historical facts relevant to our research. Some towns, which emerged in late 14th century, are thoroughly documented only around 1500. We have outlined the major differences in the urbanization process in the two countries, also emphasizing the role of colonists. In doing so, we have

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<sup>45</sup> Laurențiu Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea* (Iași, 2004), pp. 65–157.

parted ways with the interpretations given so far. There are separate subchapters dedicated to urban terminology, *târgs*, the residences of the ruler, and local structures (economic, social, ethnic, institutions). Two large chapters focus on each medieval town in the Principalities, with case studies that we hope will serve as a starting point for any researchers committed to the same subject.

The citation system is the common one. Since we have used a great number of Romanian works, we have translated their titles in English only in the bibliography at the end. The names of kings and rulers in the surrounding countries were noted in the most common English form. The names of rulers in Romanian Principalities, on the other hand, were spelled in their original form, especially since many names are specific only to this area (Radu, Mircea, Ilie, Bogdan). Their surnames were translated in English. The transliteration of town names was done with consideration to their present-day status, so as not to cause confusion. In the Middle Ages, the political status of many towns was different, and many had different names in German, Polish, Hungarian, or local languages (for instance, Trnava/Nagyszombat/Tyrnau). Furthermore, there are towns bearing the same name, although in different areas (Targoviște). This is why we chose to spell the town names according to the country they are in today.

The history of this area, and that of the towns developing here, is very diverse. This diversity is also reflected in this book, and we believe it will spark interest for a less-known region of Europe.



PART ONE

MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE





## CHAPTER ONE

### TOWNS IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND

#### *Emergence and organization*

The emergence of the medieval town in Poland has generated much debate in historiography. The pre-war German school has emphasized the concept that, before Germans arrived into Poland as part of a vast colonization to the East (*Drang nach Osten*), there were no towns, and they were created by the outlanders. German Historians would ground their theories in a definition of the town as a self-reliant settlement with a foundation charter.<sup>1</sup> After the war, with Poland again finding its place on the European map as an independent state, a new trend in historiography saw the first towns as non-autonomous trade centers, predating the arrival of Germans.<sup>2</sup>

After World War II, archaeological excavations indicated pre-urban settlements at Gniezno, Szczecin, Wolin, Gdańsk, Poznań, Wrocław, Opole, Kraków, Sandomierz, Płock and several other sites, existing ever since the 8th–9th centuries, before the medieval Polish state. The Geographer from Bavaria mentioned no fewer than 50 tribes in the latter half of the 9th century, occupying the area that Poland spans today, east of the Oder. In early times, the above-mentioned settlements were seats for chieftains, and would stand near fords and crossroads. Their fortifications were palisades, earth ramparts, and only rarely stone walls. In the plains of north and central Poland, settlements emerged on flatlands, whereas in the hills to the south, they

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<sup>1</sup> Paul W. Knoll, "The Urban Development of Medieval Poland, with Particular Reference to Kraków," in *Urban Society of Eastern Europe*, ed. Bariša Krekic (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 64–70. For the trend in historiography that discards a possible continuity between towns before the German colonization and those afterwards, see Richard Koebner, "Dans les terres de colonisation: Marchés slaves et villes allemandes," *Annales d'Histoire économique et sociale*, vol. 9 (1937), pp. 547–567.

<sup>2</sup> Benedykt Zientara, "Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation of Polish Towns During the Period of Location," *APH*, vol. XXXIV (1976), pp. 57–60. One of the first studies to challenge the former theories of German historiography in Kazimierz Tymienicki (1919). Tymienicki texts were re-published in *Pisma wybrane* (Warsaw, 1956).

would stand on higher ground. In both cases, fortifications are present, showing that chieftains were mindful of strategic aspects.<sup>3</sup>

Strongholds were more frequent in the area between the Warta and the Wępa rivers, indicating that several tribes were politically associated, with that of the Polans standing out. It was around the main seat of this tribe, Gniezno, that the Polish state would emerge. At the turn of the first millennium, Gniezno already had a pre-urban settlement, with fortifications, marketplaces, and groups of craftsmen and merchants, being also the see of an archbishopric. Along with the emergence of a coherent state, other factors also fostered Poland's growth from the 11th century on, namely: migrations ceased, and Western Slavic peoples were converted to Christianity. The end of migrations was followed by population growth, a more comprehensive use of land and more intense trade, allowing local centers to develop their own markets.<sup>4</sup> The conversion integrated Poland in the Latin world, an ever-expanding political, religious and economic structure. This is also how churches, places of worship, but also symbols of the new culture gaining ground among the Polish appeared. Since the duke was the main avenue for adopting the new religion, the first churches were naturally erected in his fortified settlements and in their suburbs. Archbishoprics were created near Gniezno, at Wrocław, Kraków or Płock and the organization model within the Church reinforced the internal administrative body of the new state. Since they acted as a core that drew elements from Southern or Western Europe and they also gathered craftsmen and tradesmen around them, religious foundations played a significant, although secondary, part in the development of medieval towns in Poland.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wojciech Kalinowski, "City Development in Poland," in E. A. Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VII, *Urban Development in East-Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary*, ed. Gabriele Gutkind (New York, 1972), pp. 18–19; Witold Hensel, "The Origins of Western and Eastern European Slav Towns," in *European Towns. Their Archaeology and Early History*, ed. M. W. Barley (London, 1977), pp. 373–375.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Gieysztor, "Les origins de la ville slaves," in *La città nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, no. 6 (Spoleto, 1959), pp. 285–287; Lech Leciejewicz, "Polish Archaeology and the Medieval History of Polish Towns," in *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century*, part I, BAR International Series, eds. H. B. Clarke and Annegret Simms, no. 255 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 335–349.

<sup>5</sup> Knoll, "The Urban Development," pp. 68–69.

Sources cite the fortified ducal settlements with a political, military, administrative and religious purpose as *gród*, *gródy* (“fortress”). This name would then transfer to the fortified seats of local castellans and nobles. The economic requirements of these *gród* also determined the emergence of *suburbium* (*podgródzie*) in their immediate vicinity, settlements with denser demographics, but with multiple purposes, the economic one prevailing. Some of these suburbs were only sparsely reinforced by palisades and earth ramparts, being linked together with the fortifications at the *gród*, such as those in Poznań, Szczecin and Gniezno; wood-planked streets were also found in their inner area. After the year 1000, the ancient *gród* were extended and new ones were added. They evolved into three types: royal seats, administrative province centers and local centers. Stone castles and episcopal churches would be erected within their limits.<sup>6</sup>

In the *suburbium*, weekly markets (*fora*) connected with hinterland settlements begin to function. Such trading posts probably existed before fortifications were built, providing for the needs of travelers and the region as a whole. Archaeological findings reveal that objects for daily use were manufactured in markets, and local, as well as foreign agricultural products were bought and sold (the foreign ones originating in pre-urban settlements at the Baltic Sea). Amber, a product largely appreciated abroad, was found in the Baltic area. The name of many of these commercial settlements is derived from the day of the week when market was held: *Wtorek* (Tuesday), *Czwartek* (Thursday), *Sobótka* (Saturday) etc., whereas others were all derivatives of the word *targ*, indicating the “market”, “trading post” in the entire Slavic world, such as *Tarczek*, *Targowisko*, *Targowa Górka*, and so on. Other settlements would be named *miejsce*, *mieście*, a counterpart for *locus* in Latin sources which captured the new social and economic status of that specific community. This inscribed the community on the path of urbanization, compared to being nothing more than a settlement before. The second term (later shifting into *miasto*), with widespread occurrences in the Czech lands, would gradually replace *gród* in Polish documents dedicated to urban centers. In Latin records, towns feature as *civitas* (larger towns, with extended autonomy) and

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<sup>6</sup> Kazimierz Dziewoński, “L'évolution des plans et de l'ordonnance des villes du haut Moyen Age en Pologne,” in *Les origines des villes polonaises*, ed. Pierre Francastel (Paris, 1960), pp. 28–40; Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” pp. 20–21.

*oppidum* (small towns, with limited or no autonomy). In his descriptions, Al-Idrisi, well-informed on the state of affairs in Europe by gleaned news from Jewish merchants who traveled the Polish lands around 1150, wrote: “[Polish] towns are flourishing and have a large population...” “[and] Kraków is a beautiful and vast town, with many houses, inhabitants, marketplaces, vineyards and gardens.” This is also how other major Polish centers were described at the time: Gniezno, Wrocław and Szczecin.<sup>7</sup>

Archaeological research suggests that the above-mentioned communities would coalesce into an urban type of structure in the 12th century, with settlements with distinct function and status being gathered together, although spreading on a relatively large surface. The ties that bound the settlement stemmed from, on the one hand, the ducal castle,<sup>8</sup> and, on the other, the marketplace (or marketplaces) developed in one of the above-mentioned suburbs of the castle. A good example in this instance is Poznań, where a suburb existed alongside the royal/ducal fortification, with each component of the settlement having a church of its own. In the 12th century, a second church is erected in the suburb, a sign that it was expanding. Two settlements also existed nearby, one with a marketplace, and the other with a monastery of the Hospitaller Knights.<sup>9</sup> This indicates that every component of these types of agglomerations had a second core of its own (fortress, church, marketplace), and these components tended to coalesce around a core that would gain the status of central landmark. The appearance of marketplaces most certainly led to taxes being applied, increasing the interest of royalty and local nobility in developing these settlements. It is thus estimated that, in the 12th century, the Polish-inhabited territory had around 250 such communities.<sup>10</sup> Some Polish historians, Alexander Gieysztor and Karol Buczek among them, consider that, ever since this century, inhabitants of these settlements, and probably their visitors as well, received certain rights under the provisions of a

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<sup>7</sup> Aleksander Gieysztor, “From Forum to Civitas: Urban Changes in Poland in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” in *La Pologne au XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Sciences Historiques a Vienne* (Warsaw, 1965), pp. 13–16.

<sup>8</sup> Between 1138 and 1320, Poland was politically torn, since it was made up of several duchies, most ruled by members of the Piast family.

<sup>9</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” p. 23; Hensel, “The Origins,” pp. 384–385.

<sup>10</sup> Tadeusz Lalik, “La genèse du réseau urbain en Pologne médiévale,” *APH*, vol. XXXIV (1976), pp. 98–104.

certain market law (*mir* = “peace”) passed by the duke. A local judge (*iudex fori*), helped by a castellan, probably had legal, administrative and fiscal tasks. We may also infer that features of the medieval type (autonomous) of town emerged in more significant centers in Poland, at the turn of the 12th century. Another argument would have been tax exemptions (*forum liberum*), as well as the granting of commercial and legal privileges (*ius fori*) that only applied to the marketplace, and not the settlement as a whole, and did not imply self-governance. Later on, these rights allegedly expanded into “the Polish municipal law,” which shaped many minor settlements, the ones that “German law” did not extend to.<sup>11</sup>

This interpretation is challenged by Benedykt Zientara, who sees the first level of legal differentiation for townsfolk as that of granting autonomy to foreign tradesmen settling in large trading centers.<sup>12</sup> This last event was crucial to the evolution of the medieval town in the Polish area. German and Polish historiography uses the term *locatio civitatis* to refer to the foundation of towns between the 13th and 16th century, as part of a larger process of German colonization. The Latin *locare* has two meanings, that of “locating,” but also that of “renting;” it was possible to have the new settlement on the “rented” and resized site of an older settlement. This intricate term led the same Benedykt Zientara to claim that *locatio* is actually a technical term, used during colonization, which had three separate meanings in Poland:

1. the actual foundation of a settlement (in most cases, settlers were unable to take up residence on a site already occupied by the locals);
2. indicates the layout of the settlement, regularized following a pattern already established between the Elba and the Oder;
3. captures the legal status of the settlement, which would change when an act granted by the sovereign to the ruler (*scultetus, advocatus*)

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<sup>11</sup> Gieysztor, “Les origines de la ville slaves,” pp. 298–301; Gieysztor, “From Forum to Civitas,” pp. 17–19; A. Gieysztor, “Les chartes de franchises urbaines et rurales en Pologne au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Les libertés urbaines et rurales du XI<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du Colloque international, Spa, 5–8 IX 1966* [Bruxelles] (1968), pp. 105–107; *History of Poland*, ed. Aleksander Gieysztor et al., 2nd ed. (Warsaw, 1979), p. 76, 83–84. See also Gerard Labuda, “Villes de “droit polonais,” in *Les origines des villes polonaises*, pp. 53–67. Details at Karol Buczek, *Targi i miasta na prawie polskim (okres wczesnośredniowieczny)* (Wrocław, 1964).

<sup>12</sup> Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 67–69.

is issued. The settlement shifts from ducal jurisdiction to that provided by “German law”.<sup>13</sup>

Some historians see the expansion of the “German law” as an important step in the process which brought Poland within the realm of Western culture. Whereas the first step was the Christianization under the influence of Rome, which only involved the upper classes, this time all social strata underwent profound transformation.<sup>14</sup> The complex process of *locatio* is not specific only to Poland, since this mode of evolution, both urban, as well as rural,<sup>15</sup> is encountered all across Central Europe. This vast process also involved middlemen, entrepreneurs, usually foreigners (*locatores*), who brought “guests” in, and who outlined new settlements, indicating and dividing plots. A relevant example for how towns were founded (*civitas libera*) is Prenzlau (today within German boundaries, close to Poland). It was here that, a short distance from an older Slavic settlement, duke Barnim I of Pomerania entrusted in 1234–1235 the creation of a new settlement to eight contractors (referred to as *fondatores*) originating from Stendal, Saxony. The eight, who were probably relatives to some degree, were granted 300 *Hufen* (around 4800 ha) that were to be distributed to settlers, each one of the *fondatores* being entitled to 160 ha for himself and the right to build mills; one of them became the duke’s representative. The settlers’ land grant was tax exempt three years, and it was to be kept in eternal and hereditary possession. A 1,5 km perimeter around the settlement was provided for unrestricted use by the community of pastures, forests, or fishing. Those trading were dispensed of paying taxes on land under ducal authority. Without being mentioned in the founding act, the old

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<sup>13</sup> Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 62–66; Knoll, “The Urban Development,” pp. 71–73, 78–80.

<sup>14</sup> Benedykt Zientara, “Melioratio terrae: the Thirteenth-century Breakthrough in Polish History,” in *A Republic of Nobles. Studies in Polish History to 1864*, eds. J. K. Fedorowicz, Maria Bogucka and Henryk Samsonowicz (Cambridge, 1982), p. 31. A detailed analysis in Adrienne Körmendy, *Melioratio terrae: Vergleichende Untersuchungen über die Siedlungsbeziehung im östlichen Mitteleuropa im 13.–14. Jahrhundert* (Poznań, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> The process of *locatio* originates in rural colonization. In post-carolingian times, it was customary to promise freedom for those settling on virgin land. These practices had begun in the Low Countries and Franconia, and they were adopted from the 12th century on by German settlers who crossed the Elba and headed east; this does not mean that the *locatio* necessarily involved strictly Germans, but also numerous elements from the local population, Poles in this instance. Case study: Richard C. Hoffmann, *Land, Liberties, and Lordship in a Late Medieval Countryside. Agrarian Structures and Change in the Duchy of Wrocław* (Philadelphia, 1989), pp. 62–73.

Slavic community persisted as nothing more than a suburb to the new town. Aside from several topical variations, many settlements in medieval Poland and other areas followed a similar pattern.<sup>16</sup>

Economic, social and demographic factors brought to Poland foreign settlers. Most were German, and they were joined by Walloons, French, and Italians. The first took residence in villages and towns, whereas the other three preferred towns, and especially the vicinity of ducal or royal courts and Church structures. The Walloons and the Italians were quick to blend in, whereas the Germans formed separate groups and kept their identity and their customs, especially in towns.<sup>17</sup> Estimates show that around 250,000 Germans arrived between the 13th and the 14th century, at a rate of some 2,000 a year. Many of them did not enter Poland directly through lands west of the Elba. Sources refer to a first generation of colonists from Flanders and Franconia as *hospites* ever since the latter half of the 12th century, who first arrived in Silesia and Pomerania. From this point, a second and third generation headed to Little Poland and Great Poland. These were also the main areas where they settled, unlike Mazovia and the eastern areas added later on, where they were fewer in number.<sup>18</sup> Those occupying pre-urban settlements were initially granted legal autonomy, under direct supervision by the duke, being entitled to having their own representative mediate disputes among their ranks and protect their interests. Ever since the first years of the 13th century, Henry the Bearded, duke of Silesia (1201–1238), tried to adapt this legal and administrative system to the new settlements he had founded. This attempt was driven by social, as well as economic and tax-related factors. The new system benefited from fewer and more

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<sup>16</sup> Heinz Quirin, "The Colonial Town as Seen in the Documents of East German Settlement," in *The Comparative History of Urban Origins*, part II, pp. 509–510; pp. 523–524, doc. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Benedykt Zientara, "Foreigners in Poland in the 10th–15th Centuries: their Role in the Opinion of Polish Community," *APH*, vol. XXIX (1974), pp. 7–8, 11–13; *History of Poland*, p. 83. For the German colonization in the Polish lands, see also the collection of studies in *Die Deutsche Ostiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Walter Schlesinger (Sigmaringen, 1975), pp. 333–438.

<sup>18</sup> Benedykt Zientara, *Melioratio terrae*, pp. 39–40. By and large, the Polish kingdom had the following lands in the Middle Ages: Little Poland (Małopolska, with its centre in Kraków), Great Poland (Wielkopolska-Poznan), Pomerania (Szczecin) and Mazovia (Warsaw). They are also joined by former Galician Rus' (Lviv from 1349), Lithuania (the dynastic union in Krewo, 1385) and Silesia (Wrocław); the last one was no longer part of the Kingdom of Poland from the 14th century on.



oriented taxes, unlike the older, numerous duties and tolls in money and labor. Wichmann of Magdeburg, archbishop (1152–1192), was hailed by many as the most important architect of colonization in the 12th century.<sup>19</sup> It was on his expertise that Henry granted settlers residing in Złotoryja a mining center, a privilege charter (around 1211) similar to that granted to Magdeburgers in 1188. This model was later applied to other recent settlements in Silesia (*novum forum*), but also in Little Poland, that Henry came to reign over: Wrocław (1211 and 1232), Lwówek (1217), Nysa (before 1223), Legnica (around 1241), etc. Soon afterwards, the system was adopted by other Polish dukes as well, who applied it to settlers in their own towns; in 1234–1235, duke Barnim I accommodated this initiative in Prenzlau, and, in 1237–1243 in Szczecin. The process gradually extended from west to east. This is how the Magdeburg law came to serve as the main blueprint in organizing an ever-increasing number of Polish towns. Other local versions of this law existed, namely that applied in Środa (*ius Novi Fori Sredense*), and that in Chełmno (*ius Culmense*), the last favored in Mazovia. Some towns on the Baltic Sea coast resisted this new trend, especially Gdańsk and some towns in Pomerania who, under Hansa's influence, initially preferred the Lübeck law. Teutons, who had conquered Prussian-inhabited lands, created their own towns which adopted the Chełmno version: Toruń (1233), Malbork (Marienburg, capital of the Teutonic state, 1276); in Gdańsk, the Lübeck law was superseded by the Chełmno law in 1343.<sup>20</sup>

The Mongolian hordes devastated certain settlements in Silesia and Little Poland in 1241. As with Hungary, the next target, local dukes and nobles could not ward off the attack despite the support of the chevaliers sent by the pope and were defeated in the battle of Legnica. The Mongolians returned in 1259, burning down Lublin, Sandomierz and Kraków, and in 1287, when the well-fortified Sandomierz and Kraków held them at bay. These attacks did not slow down the urbanization process, but instead, they led to a stunning turn of events: the development of new settlements was sped up as part of *locatio*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Quirin, "The Colonial Town," pp. 527–529, doc. 16–17.

<sup>20</sup> Zientara, "Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation," pp. 69, 71–76; Gieysztor, "From Forum to Civitas," pp. 21–22; A. Gieysztor, "Les chartes de franchises urbaines," pp. 108–110. For Gdańsk, see Andrzej Zbierski, "The Development of the Gdańsk Area from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century," in *The Comparative History of Urban Origins*, part I, pp. 326–327.

<sup>21</sup> *History of Poland*, p. 93.

In Kraków, sources suggest the existence of a *locatio* ever since 1220—it was to be confirmed in 1257, under Boleslaw the Chaste. The same period witnessed the granting of privileges to Poznań (1253), Bochnia (1253) Kalisz (1253–1260), Płock (1257), Sandomierz (1286), Warsaw (before 1300), and others. Although “Polish law” is mentioned sporadically, “German law” (*ius Teutonicum*) prevails and becomes synonymous with *ius civile*, the law protecting town inhabitants. In mining towns, a distinct version of this law will apply under the name of *ius Theutonicum magdeburgense et montanum*, containing some provisions specific to mining.<sup>22</sup>

Ever since the first liberties, communities taking root in new Polish towns had their principles of organization laid out to them:

1. legal principles: inhabitants enjoyed personal freedom and the right to organize their community as they saw fit (a right which will witness further extensions); relationships with lords are regulated;
2. topographic principles: the town’s outline was drafted, usually with a rectangular square in its center and plots of land surrounding it;
3. economic principles: tax exemptions were instated, as well as the right to use the market, duties offered to the senior and ducal or royal income. These principles would be amended later on as well.

Conditions obviously varied across communities, since those granting the foundation charters took into account settlers and the specifics of the place.<sup>23</sup> The granting of these charters did not necessarily lead to complete self-determination for those communities. The settlement was headed by a *scultetus* (Germ. *Schultheiss/Schulze*, Pol. *soltys*) or *advocatus* (Germ. *Vogt*, Pol. *wójt*), who was first of all subordinated to the duke and was largely appointed by him.<sup>24</sup> Many of those enjoying this function were among entrepreneurs who had brought in settlers (*locatores*) and who had managed the actual construction of the new

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<sup>22</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” p. 28; Danuta Molenda, “Mining Towns in Central Eastern Europe in Feudal Times,” *APH*, vol. XXXIV (1976), p. 181.

<sup>23</sup> A detailed study on this topic in Piotr Górecki, German Law Within the Polish Duchies: Variation and Routine,” in *Economy, Society, and Lordship in Medieval Poland, 1100–1250* (New York and London, 1992), pp. 236–261.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Kuhn, “German Town foundation of the Thirteenth Century in Western Pomerania,” in *The Comparative History*, part II, pp. 549–552.

settlements.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, an institution closer to the inhabitants than to the duke was “the citizens’ community” (*communitas civium*), which would create its own administrative and representative body: the city council. The council was the first exclusively urban institution, having no counterpart in rural environments, and it took direct action to acquire and extend autonomy, seeking to eliminate the duke’s power to interfere in the internal affairs of the town. This was achieved by buying ducal rights on town income or by converting these rights into an annual flat fee, as well as by acquiring municipal estates that inhabitants did not yet own. Townspeople then sought to control, own or even eliminate the *scultetus* as an institution, less successfully in some cases. The early seigneurial town was superseded here, as well as in many other parts of Europe, by the corporative medieval town. The first towns to reach this goal were those in Pomerania, in 1258 (Tczew), followed afterwards by towns in Silesia (Brzeg—1322, Wrocław—1326–1345). The *scultetus* initially held military and legal office (focusing on civil and penal matters), whereas the municipal council had economic power in the town, with a right to preside over trade-related matters by default. As the representative of the central power gradually lost authority, the council took over his legal tasks as well.<sup>26</sup> The mayor’s office (Lat. *magister civium*, Germ. *Bürgermeister*, Pol. *burmistrz*) is ancillary and mainly representative. In Kraków, mayors appeared only later, at the end of the 14th century, and were only symbolically presidents of the Council.<sup>27</sup>

Early 14th century sees some moderate political appeasement, as a result of Władysław I, duke of Kujavia and Little Poland gaining authority and being crowned king of Poland in 1320. The process of *plantatio* for some new rural and urban settlements gains new impetus once Casimir III the Great (1333–1370) reigns. Whereas in the previous century this process had been the work of dukes and of the Church, now it was primarily the king, along with some noblemen and bishops, who took an active part in creating towns. In 1317, Lublin is granted the foundation charter by Władysław. Casimir himself founded 45 towns (Kazimierz—1335, Nowy Targ—1336, Lviv—1356, Radom—1360 etc.) and supported the process of building stonewalls

<sup>25</sup> Quirin, “The Colonial Town,” pp. 511–512.

<sup>26</sup> Gieysztor, “From Forum to Civitas,” pp. 23–24; Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” p. 45; Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 76–77.

<sup>27</sup> Knoll, “The Urban Development,” pp. 91–92.

in over 30 towns (Kalisz, Płock, Sandomierz), along with building over 50 castles. The king took significant interest in developing towns since he could thus reinforce the political and economic grounds of his authority; townsfolk would be valuable allies in his fight against a sometimes seditious nobility.<sup>28</sup>

In Great Poland, as much as 90 privilege charters were granted for towns in the 14th century, 150 in the next century, and, in Mazovia, 40 and 80 towns received charters, respectively. It is also believed that, until the 14th century, the medieval urban network in Poland was largely complete.<sup>29</sup> The population in major towns outgrew their limits, so much so that adjacent suburbs or settlements developed into distinct urban centers, with groups of towns emerging in several areas. In Gdańsk, between the 14th and the 16th century, several such towns emerge, each with their own walls, marketplaces and jurisdiction: The Old Town (*Stare Miasto*), founded at around 1230–1263 on an older settlement, the New Town (*Rechstadt, Głowne Miasto*), founded before 1330, another New Town (*Jungstadt, Nowe/Młode Miasto*), built in 1380 and devastated in 1455, which is completed by the ancient suburbs of the original town, fortified in mid-15th century; the harbor and the castle were separate.<sup>30</sup> In many other towns, suburbs remained outside, and were not walled in. In this case, planning did not follow a definite pattern, as it did within defensive walls, where space restraints had warranted it.

A feature of 15th century Poland (continued across centuries to follow) was that an ever increasing number of “private” towns built by estate owners, especially in Great Poland, who saw these settlements as a source of income. Despite their familiarity with the Magdeburg law and their layout, that followed its principles, not all these urban centers were sustainable. Most of them remained market towns, providing for the needs of their area.<sup>31</sup> The status of smaller and older towns is still uncertain; these are said to have survived the adoption of “German law”. Some historians believe these had not adopted “German law” until the 15th century (even the beginning of the next century) and had followed the “municipal Polish law”. Gerard Labuda

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<sup>28</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” p. 42; Lalik, “La genèse,” pp. 105–106.

<sup>29</sup> The numbers vary from one historian to another.

<sup>30</sup> Detailed analysis, based on archaeological results, in Andrzej Zbierski, *The Development of the Gdańsk Area*, pp. 316–327.

<sup>31</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” pp. 45, 48.

even presents a list of 37 towns in Great Poland and Kujavia, most of them located on royal domain, which had temporarily returned to the previous law, since they were unable to sustain their autonomy. Views remain divided on this matter.<sup>32</sup>

There are significant differences across Polish regions that had undergone urbanization, but across towns as well. At 1500, the western area, with Great Poland, witnessed a relatively dense and well thought-out system of towns, with the eastern regions of Mazovia and Ruthenia at the other end. In the last region, the foundation of new towns was promoted by the state as part of a strategy to integrate this new territory in the kingdom. At that point, in Poland (except Lithuania), some 600 urban centers existed. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the urbanization process was somewhat slower and took flight only in the 16th century. It is estimated that around 900 towns emerged here in all, the Duchy spanning a much larger territory than that of the rest of the kingdom. One town provided for the needs of a territory that decreased around 1550, from 600 to 270 sq km, each with a radius of around 9 km. However, most were small centers, *miasteczko*, in which inhabitants also practiced agriculture. In many cases, “implantations” were unsuccessful, since the founding project did not always avoid failure. This type of initiative was hazardous for those undertaking it (dukes, the king, local nobility, the Church), since newcomers, as well as large sums of money, vast tracts of land and privileges were at stake.<sup>33</sup>

We may therefore identify two major stages in the development of the medieval town in the Polish area. The first one is that of settlements taking on urban features due to their economic function and since they were the seats of political or religious leaders (developing along the lines of fortification-suburbs-marketplace). The level of freedom they had reached was not sufficient to allow them to align to the Central-European urban model. The second stage, that of the so-called “location” marks the time when dukes encouraged colonists to settle in or around above-mentioned settlements, granting them legal rights and a distinct status, based on “German law” (the Magdeburg law). These liberties were initially limited, the king or the lord of the

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<sup>32</sup> Gięsztor, “Les origines de la ville slaves,” pp. 299–301; *History of Poland*, pp. 83–84; Labuda, “Villes de “droit polonais,” pp. 58–63.

<sup>33</sup> Andrzej Janeczek, “Town and Country in the Polish Commonwealth,” in *Town and Country in Europe, 1300–1800*, ed. S. R. Epstein (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 163–168.

place maintaining economic and political control; later on, the community of townsfolk enjoyed autonomy to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the settlement.

The evolution of towns relapsed in the 15th century, when noblemen gained authority and start restricting urban autonomy. This attitude is easily explainable, since political interests (the great magnates of the time did not wish to have the king and the towns in too close concord), as well as economic interests were at stake. The nobility held vast domains, which it exploited to their own use. The urbanization in Poland is made particular exactly by the fact that, even though the kingdom was more intensely urbanized than other states in the region, the local nobility played a significant part both in building new towns, as well as in restricting their future growth.

#### *Population, society and economy*

Demographically speaking, few centers in the kingdom of the 15th century reached over 10000 inhabitants. Wrocław and Gdańsk had around 20000 inhabitants, Kraków, under 20000, Lviv ranging around 8000–10000, whereas Warsaw had 5000, Poznań, 4000, and Sandomierz, 2000, classifying as mid-sized town. Many urban settlements had a small number of inhabitants, with the population under 2000, but experts estimate that since Poland was urbanized to a greater degree than other regions in Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, for instance), the population of towns represented in the 15th century around 15% of the global kingdom's population (with significant differences across regions). This was situated at around two million inhabitants in 1350, increasing to 7.5 millions in 1500 (the last figure includes Lithuania).<sup>34</sup> Still, even when town evolution peaked, we cannot describe them as actively involved in the political life of the kingdom. Towns did not receive the right to be represented in Seim, with the exception of several large towns. Since royal authority was gradually deprived of a large part of its decision-making capabilities, these fell under the sway of nobility.

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<sup>34</sup> The Great Duchy of Lithuania covered around three quarters of the kingdom, yet its population was less than that of Poland (Irena Gieysztorowa, "Research into the Demographic History of Poland," *APH*, vol. XVIII (1968), pp. 9–10, table 1).

The society of towns was dominated by a small group of merchants with economic and political influence. After the office held by the *scultetus* was eliminated, this group also gained the upper hand on the council and took over the main functions in town. Research into occupations of town councilmen shows that most were tradesmen and few were artisans. In Kraków, between 1320 and 1350, only 14 members out of 88 were artisans. The urban patriciate was made up of Germans, but also Italians (in Kraków) and Armenian (in Lviv). The rest of the population was made up of Germans, Poles, Jews or Armenians, who were involved in small trade and crafts. Germans were the majority in Prussian towns and parts of Silesia, whereas Poles were predominant in the rest of Poland. To the east, Ruthenians, Lithuanians and even Mongols added to the demographics. At the lower end of the social scale were paupers, servants or day laborers, who did not enjoy citizenship and were usually from surrounding villages.<sup>35</sup> An exception in the ethnical mix were mining towns that, due to their economic orientation, attracted inhabitants from various parts of Europe. In centers in Little Poland and Silesia, along with Poles and Germans, many Italian, Czech, Hungarian and even Dalmatian miners settled.<sup>36</sup>

Before new economic and legal bases were laid down, many noblemen used to live in towns. However, once this process got underway, many preferred to leave, and others joined the patriciate, such as the Spitemir family in Kraków and the Sclanczes in Wrocław.<sup>37</sup> Another important social category in towns was made up of clergymen. Many towns were bishopric centers or were home to monasteries for various monastic orders, as well as parish churches, so priests and monks were numerous and influential. Ever since mid 13th century (1264), Boleslaw the Chaste granted Jews<sup>38</sup> privileges underlining their singular status in urban society, privileges which would be cancelled or reinforced periodically, depending on the political climate of the time. The Wiślica Statutes, in 1346, saw Casimir III extend these rights to the entire kingdom. The crown granted Jews personal freedom, freedom of worship, freedom to have synagogues, judicial

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<sup>35</sup> *History of Poland*, pp. 129–131.

<sup>36</sup> Danuta Molenda, “Mining Towns,” pp. 179–180.

<sup>37</sup> Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 80–82.

<sup>38</sup> The first Jews are mentioned in Poland in 11th century’s Przemyśl (Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” p. 21).

courts and to trade within the kingdom. They were not considered citizens and depended on the royal treasury. They brought significant income, since they dealt in trade, small crafts and especially usury, at that time sanctioned and regulated by the royal house. Jews were victimized here as throughout Europe after the Great Plague, but to a lesser degree than in other parts. The relatively tolerant climate in Poland and the support of the royalty had many Jews come here at the end of the 14th century, especially after having been subjected to acts of oppression in Germany (1426–1450), Silesia (1453) or Bohemia (1485). In Western Europe, some Church representatives were critical of this welcoming climate for Jews in Poland, a country afterwards dubbed *paradisus Judeorum*.<sup>39</sup> However, the increasing number of Jews in towns sparked conflicts here as well, whether triggered by preachers or townspeople. In Kraków, at the end of 15th century, oppressed Jews began relocating nearby, in a separate quarter in Kazimierz.<sup>40</sup> In 1495, King John Albert (1492–1501) forced the remaining ones to follow in their footsteps. It was in Warsaw, in 1483, that Jews had to move outside city walls as well.<sup>41</sup> Since the turn of the 14th century, an ever-increasing number of Armenians had to move to the eastern parts of the kingdom, in former Galician Rus', the largest community being situated in Lviv. Here, they were inferior in status to Germans and Poles, who, according to the 1356 "Magdeburg law" practically had the town in their grasp. However, the wealth they amassed also gave them a right to have their say in commercial relationships of the town with the Black Sea region. The royalty allowed them to organize themselves following "Armenian law". Confirmed in 1434 and 1462–1469 and approved by Sigismund I by the statute of 1519, this law reunited Armenian, German, Byzantine and Mosaic legal provisions. Armenians were governed by community elders (initially 6, then 12), who made up a court of justice headed over by a *wójt*; from 1356 on, the other *wójt* or *advocatus*, the mayor of the town, supervised this

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<sup>39</sup> Zientara, "Foreigners in Poland," pp. 25–26; Eleonora Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov. Their Role in Oriental Trade, 1400–1600," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* (Paris) vol. XX, no. 3–4 (1979), pp. 366–368.

<sup>40</sup> Kazimierz was separate from Kraków in the Middle Ages, and they were divided by the Vistula river. Until the end of the 14th century, Kazimierz was fortified with walls and had around 2000 inhabitants (Knoll, "The Urban Development," p. 104).

<sup>41</sup> *History of Poland*, pp. 131–132; Knoll, "The Urban Development," pp. 93–94.



court. Other Armenian communities were in Kamieniec (Podolski), Lutsk and Sniatyn.<sup>42</sup>

In Poland, liberties were obtained against a backdrop of economic growth which the entire continent enjoyed in the 13th century. This growth would reach into the next two centuries for Central Europe. After overcoming the shock of the first Mongol invasions, Poland entered a new stage in its development, characterized by an increasing number of rural and urban settlements, enhanced trade and crafts, as well as the opening of new mines. All these factors led to towns involving themselves in regional, and then international trade. Since they also enjoyed liberties, villages provided cereal crops, livestock and produce which were traded for cloth and tools in marketplaces which served as outlets for more and more tradesmen. The main trading partners were in Western Europe. However, from the 14th century on, especially after merging with Lithuania, routes opened to the Black Sea and the Levant, as well as the Russian areas, respectively. Poland bridged Western and Eastern economies, with towns benefiting directly from this state of affairs.<sup>43</sup>

Economically, large centers in the provinces, such as Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań, Toruń, Gdańsk, and later Lviv, were involved in trading on a regional and international scale. Kraków was a major commercial hub. All trading routes from the Baltic Sea led here: one started in Gdańsk, via Toruń, and another in Szczecin, via Poznań. From Kraków, it passed through Buda, via Prešov and Košice. In 1324, Kraków and Košice reached a mutual agreement (*pactum mutuum*) that guaranteed concessions in trading rights. In Europe, mention was often made of “Polish copper” despite the fact that Poland was not a major manufacturer of copper. Copper actually found its way into the kingdom from Hungary, brought over by Polish tradesmen. A major trading route was Vistula. From Kraków, the river allowed for passage by ship and was used to carry heavy goods, such as timber, salt and copper. Prices were low, taxes were fewer, and, moreover, Vistula flowed through many large towns of the kingdom, such as Sandomierz, Warsaw or Toruń, allowing products to be delivered straight to the Baltic Sea, in Gdańsk. The last town, along with Szczecin

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<sup>42</sup> Nadel-Golobič, “Armenians and Jews,” pp. 360–365; for the Armenian law, see also Marian Oleś, *The Armenian Law in the Polish Kingdom (1356–1519). A Juridical and Historical Study* (Roma, 1966).

<sup>43</sup> Janeczek, “Town and Country,” pp. 158–159.

and Malbork, was part of the Hansa, which also had Kraków and Wrocław as its members, even though these two towns were not linked to the sea (mandatory for entering the Hansa). The strong ties that the above towns entertained with the leading economic centers in Flanders, and especially, Bruges, allowed them into the league. It was also through Kraków that a major trading route passed, linking Germany and Silesia to Galician Rus' and Eastern Europe. In the 14th century, Lviv took advantage of a relatively balanced political environment and its consequence, dependable roads. Here, routes from Kraków and Sandomierz (from Toruń and the Baltic Sea) converged with another route, coming from the Black Sea, in Crimea (from Caffa and Tana), or from the Dniester and the Danube deltas (from Cetatea Albă and Kilia), passing through Moldavia.<sup>44</sup> Casimir III granted merchants in Nuremberg the right to do business in Poland up to Lviv, and it was so that Eastern products brought by Saracen merchants could reach the Western world on a different route than the Mediterranean one. Metal was exported together with salt, cattle, fish, wool, grains, timber, fur. Conversely, imports focused on spices, silks, fine cloth, oil, wine, and metalwork. The largest annual fairs were held in Kraków, Wrocław, Gniezno, Poznań, Toruń, Jarosław, Lublin, Sandomierz, Brest and Lviv.<sup>45</sup>

Between the 13th and the 14th century, towns sought to be partially or completely exempt of customs, at least in their duchy of origin. Poznań achieved this in 1283, and Kraków, between 1288 and 1306. On the other hand, Wrocław bought the right to collect customs and taxes from foreign tradesmen. The staple right (*ius stapuli*, *Stapelrecht*) was granted to Wrocław (1274), Szczecin (1283), Sandomierz (1286), Kraków (1306, initially only for copper), Kazimierz (1335), Lviv (1380), Lublin (1392), Poznań (1394) and several others. The granting of this right to even more towns led to rivalry and conflicts, especially between neighboring towns, such as Kraków and Kazimierz, but also between large centers, such as Kraków and Wrocław. Kraków sought, and even managed, to a large extent, to control imports and

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<sup>44</sup> Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews," pp. 355–357; F. W. Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland. An Economic Geography of Cracow, from its origin to 1795* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 93–102, 115–117.

<sup>45</sup> Balázs Nagy, "Transcontinental Trade from East-Central Europe to Western Europe (14th and 15th Centuries)," in *The Man of Many Devices, who Wandered Full Many Ways. Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak*, eds. Balázs Nagy, Marcell Sebők (Budapest, 1999), pp. 349–350.

exports from and to Hungary, and former Galician Rus', respectively. The dynastic union with Lithuania greatly expanded the kingdom's economic reach in the east. Roads and towns in Lithuania were connected to western ones, and produce was more easily marketed. Some western tradesmen were not content with the staple right granted to Lviv in 1380, which forced all those traveling the "Mongol road" to stop here for 14 days. After 1444, all goods coming to Lviv were to be sold in this town.<sup>46</sup>

A series of mining towns are present here, much like in the kingdom of Hungary or in Bohemia. The southern parts of the kingdom, in Silesia and Little Poland, boasted vast resources of lead, iron, silver, zinc and salt. Salt was extracted in several mining towns in the Kraków area, with Bochnia and Wieliczka as the more significant among them. Lead and silver came from Olkusz and Sławków. Salt brought many benefits to the royal house, which kept a watchful eye on its extraction and sale via its royal monopoly. Lead garnered less attention and was extracted by hundreds of small companies owned by German, Italian and Polish miners. In the former case, the king had superior jurisdiction and taxed production by one eighth. Towns created by these miners emerged in the immediate vicinity of mines. Among them, only Olkusz enjoyed extended privileges.<sup>47</sup> Krakówians were the ones who initially exported ore to the south, and they took interest in this trading venue ever since the 13th century. In Hungary, lead mined in Olkusz was known as "Kraków lead," since tradesmen in this town controlled to a large degree transport and sale of this metal. What's more, the head of mining operations (*żupnik*, *Bergermeister*) was elected among leading citizens in Kraków. They would also lend money to miners extracting lead to the surface. Important tradesmen in Kraków were joined by Italians, acting as agents for banks in the peninsula, who leased salt exploitation from the king, as well as tradesmen from Nuremberg. Many of these foreign merchants settled in Kraków and became citizens. At the end of the 15th century, Jan Thurzó, a renowned entrepreneur controlling part of the mines in Slovakia, entered the market. An associate of

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<sup>46</sup> *History of Poland*, p. 87; Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews," p. 354; Carter, *Trade and Urban Development*, pp. 69–70, 79–80, 97.

<sup>47</sup> Danuta Molenda, "Investments in Ore Mining in Poland from the 13th to the 17th Centuries," *The Journal of European Economic History*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1976), pp. 151–154.

Fugger's in Augsburg, Thurzó bought lead mines or credited miners who did not wish to sell, which triggered a royal intervention to limit his monopoly. Following its withdrawal from Hungary, Fugger quit his business in Poland as well in mid-16th century. Many mining towns functioned as long as there were mines. After operations ceased, their growth was arrested (in 16th century Olkusz) with some settlements lapsing into villages. Others reoriented, and inhabitants focused on other activities. After facing the prospect of gold ore depletion at the end of the 14th century, towns such as Złotoryja or Lwówek oriented towards manufacturing textile goods.<sup>48</sup>

There were significant differences between the internal economy of larger and smaller towns. In the larger ones, crafts completed international and local trade as main professions. At the turn of the 16th century, in Gdańsk, records show that there were around 3000 workshops, in Kraków, around 700, and in Warsaw, approximately 500. Craftsmen were typically organized into guilds, with their main features remaining unchanged until modern times. Craftsmen worked in small workshops alongside journeymen and apprentices, who could be promoted. An analysis of customs papers in Polish towns shows, however, that crafted goods were not a major part of exports. Instead, small towns relied heavily on agriculture. Most had been granted farmland, and half of the townspeople worked it in a corporate structure, similar to that of craftsmen or merchants (*fraternitas rusticorum*). Agricultural production in towns was not substantial enough to bring income and serviced internal need. Craftsmen and tradesmen who catered to local requirements also existed here.

Ever since their foundation charters were granted, towns also received a land grant that brought them their supply of goods. Some towns had domains with one or more villages: Gdańsk had 76 villages, Toruń had 33, Poznań, 17, Lviv and Lublin three, and Kraków, two. There were also towns that bought villages, such as Olkusz, that bought three villages at the end of the 15th century.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Molenda, "Mining Towns," pp. 171–174; Molenda, "Investments in Ore Mining," pp. 161–166; Carter, *Trade and Urban Development*, pp. 112–115.

<sup>49</sup> Maria Bogucka, "Limited Urban Landownership: Towns and Nobility in Early Modern Poland, c. 1500–1650," in *Power, Profit and Urban Land. Landownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns*, eds. Finn-Einar Eliassen and Geir Ate Ersland (Aldershot, 1996), p. 168.

*Topography*

Changes undergone by the layout of towns in the 13th century also had an impact on topography. The urban agglomeration in previous centuries, made up of a castle, suburbs and other settlements gives way to more concentrated built-up areas, following a regular quadrangle pattern, with a central market (*Ring, rynek*) and streets that crossed each other at a right angle. Szczecin was one of the few larger towns with no such market. In large centers, auxiliary markets with livestock, fish, hay etc later follow the main market. Here, the regulated layout and the large central market were also designed to avoid the issue of crowding on streets close to trading spots. The centerpiece of the medieval urban layout was the plot, elongated, with its narrow side and its stall or its workshop facing the street or the market, the rest of the plot being taken by a long yard. In the privilege charter of some towns, the exact size of the plots, gardens or fields is stated, suggesting previous, careful measurements. It was held that, before this process of “urban creation”, the concept of “plot” did not even exist. The number of plots in a new town determined the number of inhabitants. Also, when the new settlement was planned, the town hall, the parish church, the hospital, the cemetery were also allotted parcels. The first two were placed adjacent to the central market, the last were more peripheral. Houses were mostly wooden, and only those of the patriciate, in the market and along main streets were built of stone. The central market was surrounded by these houses and shops, whereas its middle section was populated with the booths of merchants and artisans, a house where products were weighed, the town hall, but also the pillory. Streets bore craft names and grouped together craftsmen engaging in such trade. Jews lived in neighborhoods on the outskirts of towns.<sup>50</sup>

Structural changes of towns in the 13th–14th centuries spawned various types of layouts, most preserving the basic principles stated above. The rights that lords and dukes (or the king, later on) held over land were a constraint, since those “planting” the new settlement could only do so on their domains and depending on the possibility to inhabit them. In pre-*locatio* settlements, one may notice that the land was held by several owners, the duke, monasteries, or other noble-

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<sup>50</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” pp. 28–30, 48–50.

men, entailing changes in their layout. This is how in towns such as Trzebnica, the old settlement was redesigned, whereas in Gniezno, the new town developed over an older marketplace, near the castle. In Szczecin, on the other hand, the layout was relatively irregular, since it also embedded the older layout of the settlement. In many other cases, the original site was abandoned and a new settlement was created, at a distance varying from tens of meters to several kilometers: Prenzlau, Kalisz, Radom, Sandomierz etc. Towns that predated them persisted, but as suburbs or even villages. Their existence is suggested by place names such as *Stare Miasto*, relatively frequent in Poland. This is also the reason why older places of worship, such as cathedrals or monasteries, fell outside the newly constructed perimeter. Some more recent settlements also had local inhabitants move in, others, such as those erected in the north-east by Teutonic Knights, did not. Dukes contributed to fortifications, and towns such as Wrocław or Poznań abandoned their older castle, and erected a new one as part of the defensive system. The process of fortifying towns intensified in the 14th century and carried over into the 15th. Whereas some large towns were forced to expand their walls to cover new ground, in many other towns, uninhabited areas also continued to exist as gardens inside the walls. Small towns remained exposed, with insufficient means of defense.<sup>51</sup> In all, it was estimated that when the reign of Casimir III came to an end, only 15% of Polish towns were walled in.<sup>52</sup>

*Case studies: Wrocław and Kraków*

In Silesia, the most important urban hub was Wrocław. Given the ambiguity in sources, the emergence of this town sparked controversy. It is assumed today that the new foundations of the medieval Wrocław were two-fold. Firstly, around 1211, what is known even today as the “New Market” (Nowy Targ) was created: a new trading post separate from the fortress and the suburb, indicating the complete spatial makeover underway here. In the second stage, a new market was

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<sup>51</sup> Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 71–72, 79–80; Gieysztor, “From Forum to Civitas,” pp. 27–28.

<sup>52</sup> A table of fortified towns, with the construction date for walls and the material used, in Jarosław Widawski, *Miejskie mury obronne w państwie polskim do początku XV wieku* (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 526–529.

established around 1232. The last marketplace displayed an impressive size, similar to the one in Kraków. Wrocław was devastated by the Mongols in 1241 and rebuilt in 1261, its boundaries marked by fortifications. One aspect of note is that this town's layout is more extended than that of others, covering around 40 build sites, each with 4, up to 10 plots. Its population developed and a new line of walls was built in 1330, encompassing the New Town, founded in 1263. Ever since early 14th century, the town escaped the grasp of Polish kings and entered under Bohemian monopoly. This political change did not alter the economic status of the town, which remained a major regional center.<sup>53</sup>

Wrocław rivalled Kraków, considered the most important Polish town in medieval times (*totius Poloniae urbs celeberrima*). At the end of the 10th century, the stronghold of a local ruler was located here, a ruler who pledged loyalty to duke Mieszko in Greater Poland. Near this stronghold, on the Wawel hill, archaeological research revealed a *suburbium* (later referred to as Okół), reinforced with wood palisades. A turning point was the transfer of the main kingdom seat from Gniezno to Kraków during the reign of Casimir I (1034–1058). Kraków had already become a major point of transit on the trading route which started in Kiev, passed through Prague and reached Regensburg. Previously, it was thought that refounding the town on principles of the “German law” occurred after the destruction unleashed here by Mongols in 1241, specifically in 1257. There are however sources which suggest that several other attempts were made a few decades earlier, even around 1220. In 1228 and 1230, a certain Petrus is mentioned in documents as *scultetus Cracoviensis*. It was assumed that Henry the Bearded, duke of Silesia, tried to “plant” a new settlement near the old Kraków to consolidate his control over the region. It is unknown to what degree this initiative was successful. In 1257, Boleslaw the Chaste issued a charter which granted the community settled north and north-west of Okół the right of Magdeburg and also laid down the principles for drafting a new, regulated urban plan. This was relatively oval in shape, 800 meters long and 700 meters wide, and spanned over around 30 hectares. The driving idea behind this design was to have all streets cross each other at a right angle, but this was not possible in

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<sup>53</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” pp. 31, 45.

the southern part of the town, since remains of the previous settlement persisted. The central marketplace in Kraków stands out by its size (a square with sides reaching around 200 meters), and is considered to be the largest in Europe. Those designing it along these sizes were aware of the economic and especially commercial weight of the town. Not long after *locatio*, the town was enclosed in stone walls. Butcheries, tanneries, mills and breweries were left outside its limits. Until the end of the 13th century, Okół was included in the town, and Jews settled in the south-eastern corner of the town.<sup>54</sup> The 1257 act allowed anyone to settle in the town, provided they could present papers (*litterae genealogiae*) or bring witnesses that testified to their Catholic faith and legitimate descendancy. The new citizen was supposed to take an oath of faith to Kraków and “waive” their personal freedom for that of the town.<sup>55</sup>

Between the 14th and the 15th century, the town reinforced its position as a first-ranking political and economic center of the kingdom. It was by no accident that Casimir III created a university here in 1364, the second in the area after Prague (1348), in which he adopted the Italian model. Law was the main course of study and it allowed many students to take over functions in the administration of the kingdom. Later on, it was reorganized and Theology was emphasized as well. In the 15th century, at least 18000 students studied at this university, some of them also coming from regions inhabited by Romanians.<sup>56</sup>

Where internal organization is concerned, Kraków was governed by an *advocatus* and a town council. The former represented ducal (and royal) authority and had legal and military function, being responsible for defending the town. Its income was based on taxes, customs, court fines and rents. This office granted significant influence and it allowed one of its German holders, Albert, to challenge the authority of duke Władysław of Kujavia in 1311, who controlled Kraków. Albert's uprising, supported by the German patriciate, was crushed one year later. This is also the time when the authority of the office granted to the *advocatus* begins diminishing. Instead, the power of the

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<sup>54</sup> Kalinowski, “City development in Poland,” pp. 33–34; Knoll, “The Urban Development,” pp. 79–81, 85–89.

<sup>55</sup> Carter, *Trade and Urban Development*, pp. 65–66.

<sup>56</sup> *History of Poland*, p. 133; *Album studiosorum Universitas Cracoviensis*, vol. I–II, ed. B. Ulanowski (Kraków, 1887).



town council increases, that manages in 1475 to buy the function of *advocatus* and make it dependent on itself. Until then, and especially after 1370, against a backdrop of power struggles within the kingdom, the council consolidated its authority. Made up of six members initially, it would end up having 24, with most of them chosen among wealthy merchants.<sup>57</sup>

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The 16th century was a turning point for Poland. A series of political, social, religious, cultural and economic transformations occurred, and their effects lasted for centuries to come. The middle and upper nobility rise to power, gaining the upper hand on royalty, but also on other categories, such as that of townspeople. The power of the Sejm increases, and after 1505 town representatives are excluded, even though they were previously allowed to vote taxes and amend certain laws. Only representatives from Kraków, Poznań, Lublin and Wilno were accepted, without having the right to vote. The statutes of 1538 and 1567 limited the rights of town councils, and they, as well as the mayor were placed under the control of a *starostas*, a representative of the king. During the 16th century, the Sejm issued decisions that exempted goods bought by noblemen from taxes, as well as the merchandise produced on their estates. Other laws, which prevented townspeople to trade grains, to export goods outside the country or to buy land outside towns, could not be enforced. At the end of the 16th century in Lithuania, owners of large estates could found urban settlements without needing any confirmation from the king. A parallel development was that of an increasing number of town inhabitants who were not accepted as community members. In Gdańsk or Poznań, paupers came to represent 30–40% of the town population. Decisions of the Sejm were the obvious signs of a shift in attitude towards urban centers, which would have a negative impact in the following centuries. Along with losing the small political influence they had, towns were also affected by the economic crisis which would begin at the end of the 16th century. The “refeudalisation” of society, the emphasis on

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<sup>57</sup> Knoll, “The Urban Development,” pp. 90–91.

serf labor on large estates, the decrease in demand for urban products and the increase in consumption of luxury goods halted economic growth in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Jerzy Topolski, "Sixteenth-century Poland and the Turning Point in European Economic Development," in *A Republic of Nobles*, pp. 70–71, 74–89; Maria Bogucka, "Polish Towns Between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *A Republic of Nobles*, pp. 138–148; Janeczek, "Town and Country," pp. 160–161, 173–175.



## CHAPTER TWO

### TOWNS IN THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

#### *Emergence and organization*

The specifics of the Pannonia, a centuries-long passageway or settling ground for migrating peoples, prompted the medieval, urban-type settlements to emerge only later in this area, after 1150–1200.<sup>1</sup> After sedentarization and the conversion to Christianity (around 1000), Hungarians entered an area of Latin influence, but this did not lead to the immediate appearance of towns. The newly created kingdom was not yet endowed with the elements required by the emergence of these centers. To a certain extent, the development of medieval towns in Hungary was shaped similarly to those in Poland. Some settlements display pre-urban features long before the 13th century, when Central-European models are adopted. Among the Roman ruins at Vienna, Esztergom, Sopron and Szombathely, archaeologists identified members of an ever-changing population, who ensured a certain degree of continuity.<sup>2</sup> More stable settlements emerged in the Carolingian age as administrative and military centers, but the Hungarian invasion (at the end of the 9th century) destroyed the weak Carolingian marches. A climate of relative stability was instated in the area only after Hungarian forays to the West were stopped, given Otto's victory by the Lech river (955). The emergence of the Kingdom of Hungary and the creation of more stable political and economic circumstances led to the development of royal seats, later fortified, near Buda (at Óbuda) or in Esztergom, Székesfehérvár and Veszprém. Shortly afterwards, border strongholds were added, some sizable enough, such as that in Sopron.<sup>3</sup> Around them, near seats of royal representatives or the new bishopric

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Christie, "Towns and Peoples on the Middle Danube in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *Towns in Transition. Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. N. Christie and S.T. Loseby (Aldershot, c. 1996), pp. 71–98.

<sup>2</sup> György Györffy, "Les débuts de l'évolution urbaine en Hongrie," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, X<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Université de Poitiers) vol. XII, no. 2 (1969), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Pál Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526* (London, 2001), p. 40.

centers, groups of merchants and artisans took residence and supplied those in the above seats with basic goods. Research revealed that, in many cases, these groups, although communicating with each other, did not mix. Each resided in a specific area, dictated by their trade or origin. A place of worship was at the core of each group. It was only later that they coalesced into a single settlement. Pre-urban centers, in which livestock, fur, slave, metal and clothing were actively traded, are mentioned by numerous Western travelers or those coming from the East: Otto of Freising, Odo of Deogilo, al-Idrisi, Abu Hamid etc.<sup>4</sup> These settlements were unfortified and not unlike villages in their outward features. However, they did have marketplaces where trade took place first on Sundays, and then on Saturdays. Until the year 1200, over 100 of these settlements were identified, but only part of them would later become towns.<sup>5</sup>

The economic and military agenda of Hungarian kings led them to provide incentives for Western and Central-European settlers in the 12th century. The newcomers had special status. Initially, privileges were granted to foreign monks founding abbeys, and were then transferred, only naturally, to the first settlers, but also to foreign peoples who pledged allegiance to the king (the Cumans). Sources mention “guests” (*hospes/hospites*) who founded permanent settlements (originally termed *vici latinorum*) around royal seats, in separate areas, specifically designated for them (Esztergom and Székesfehérvár). Wallon colonists arriving in Székesfehérvár walled in their designated neighborhood (*vicus Latinorum*) and received privileges ever since the reign of Stephen III (1162–1172). In 1181, in Pécs, *hospites* and *maior hospitum* are already mentioned as witnesses, a sign that colonization had slowly but steadily reached full flight.<sup>6</sup> These were the first cores of Western urban development in Hungary.

Until the reign of Andrew II (1205–1235), Jewish and Muslim merchants played a significant part in Hungary’s external trade, especially that with the Kievan Rus’ and Constantinople. Jews and Muslims had attained key positions in the kingdom, some even administrating royal income. Starting with King Andrew’s reign, based on the religious

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<sup>4</sup> Martyn C. Rady, *Medieval Buda: a Study of Municipal Government and Jurisdiction in the Kingdom of Hungary* (New York, 1985), pp. 7–8.

<sup>5</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> *Elenchus Fontium Historiae Urbanae*, vol. III, part 2, *Hungary*, ed. András Kubinyi (Budapest, 1997), no. 12; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 60–61.

intolerance sparked by the canons of the Fourth Council of Lateran (1215), but also by pressure from the clergy, trade with Jews or Muslims is forbidden. They are to be replaced by Germans, and Non-Christians are not to have access to various offices in the kingdom. The measures applied led to the gradual exclusion of Eastern elements in Hungarian towns. Still, until 1241, most inhabitants, whether those of pre-urban settlements or just villages, were placed on the same level of legal standing by royal authority. The few places where *Latin* groups took residence were the exception. The Mongol invasion in 1241 left the kingdom in disarray. King Bela IV (1235–1270), vanquished in the battle of Muhi, was forced to seek sanctuary in Dalmatia, in Trogir. Urban and rural settlements in the kingdom were destroyed almost completely, the only ones left standing being Esztergom, Székesfehérvár and several fortified ones. Thousands of people were taken prisoners, fields were left without workers, and the years to come were ridden with disease and famine.<sup>7</sup> The lack of efficient defenses, as well as the terrible toll the invasion took on demographics triggered a sequence of political, military, and social reforms that took the kingdom-wide transformation begun during the reign of Andrew II to a new level. Hungarian kings had to adopt an even more open policy towards towns, whose economic and strategic weight had increased. We have mentioned Székesfehérvár, the first town in Hungary to have historically been granted a privilege during the reign of Stephen III. Andrei II and especially Bela IV continued this policy and granted liberty charters even before the Mongol attack in 1241. In this period, Székesfehérvár finds its older privilege confirmed (1237), and Trnava (1238) or Starý Tekov (1240) are granted liberty charters. The invasion hence hastened this process, but did not spark it.<sup>8</sup> A more intense urban development may be seen in the western parts of Hungary, a situation with economic grounds. Trade with Constantinople had decreased significantly after having been conquered during the 4th crusade, and the Mongol attack had dealt a serious blow to the relatively active trade with Kiev. Instead, relations with Germany (via Vienna or Prague) and Italy (via Venice) are favored, encouraging

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<sup>7</sup> *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Bloomington, 1994), pp. 24–25.

<sup>8</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, p. 15. A collection of the most relevant medieval documents regarding medieval Hungarian towns in *Elenchus*, vol. III, part 2, *Hungary*.

the development of settlements placed along routes connecting the kingdom with the regions of Europe.<sup>9</sup>

The 13th century was a true economic boom for the entire Europe. Farther up north, Poland saw an increase in urbanization, similar to that in Hungary. The Hansa had expanded its commercial relations along the entire Baltic Sea, just as Venice and Genoa were controlling the Mediterranean Sea and reached out towards the Black Sea. The northern and southern parts of the continent communicated via an ever-expanding network of roads. Lying in the middle of this circuit, Hungary, with a wealth of mineral, but also agricultural resources, obviously took advantage of it, especially after the Mongol attacks subsided. A major geographical factor was the Danube, in itself a trade route. It was no accident that many of the important towns in the kingdom spread along the river. The main seats of royalty also preferred this location, and all had ports. Ever since the mid-13th century, the number of towns being granted privilege charters begins to multiply: Zagreb (1242), Nitra (1248), Komárno (1265), Győr (1271), Sopron (1277), Pressburg (1291, a town called Bratislava only in modern times), Prešov (1299), and others. Until 1300, 32 settlements received royal privileges. In the urbanization process, foreign settlers continued to be an important actor. The low demographics determined the king to attract even more settlers. Whereas townspeople were formerly referred to mainly as *cives* in documents,<sup>10</sup> from the latter half of the 13th century on, the designation of *hospites* is added, as an indication of the origin of the new categories in urban society. The *cives et hospites* phrase occurs in most documents regarding towns in the kingdom, and towns were mostly populated with Germans in mid 14th century. *Hospites* did not cover only Germans, but also other categories taking residence in towns or villages, which had a specific legal standing. Even so, historians noted the connection between the granting of privileges and the colonization of foreign ethnical elements in Hungary. To provide the incentives for colonization, the king had two options: he had to grant foreigners similar or more substantial rights than those they had in their homeland or to grant similar or better privileges than those given by neighboring princes, also busy

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<sup>9</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> See the case of Sopron below.

enticing settlers to their lands.<sup>11</sup> Statistically, the migration of German elements was more significant. In Transylvania and the northern Carpathians, German miners opened up quarries. The large migration of peasants in the 12th–13th centuries from Saxony, the Rhine area and Franconia (*Saxones* and *Teutonic*) is also significant. As was the case throughout Central Europe, settlers were brought in and organized by entrepreneurs (*locatores*), who went on to become the leaders of the newly formed communities (*scultetus, advocatus*).<sup>12</sup>

Most historians believe that it was only from the reign of Bela IV on that a thought-out urbanization policy begins in Hungary. His and his followers' efforts to increase the number of towns led to the vast program of reforms required to be put into motion after the Mongol invasion. The king no longer gathered enough income from his domains, since they had been largely relinquished to the nobility. This is why he encouraged the development of towns and trade as safer grounds for his finances. As a class of townspeople rose up, they provided the opportunity to act as a counterweight to the power of the great landlords. This was why the urbanization of Hungary, which displayed an even faster development in the latter half of the 13th century and in the 14th century must be put into a larger perspective, that of political relations, and not only economic ones. Where military matters are concerned, towns fortified by walls were supposed to act as fortresses, whereas urban communities were to fit up soldiers fighting in the king's army.<sup>13</sup>

The model of organization for new towns was that encountered in the 12th century in eastern and northern Germany, and it was also adopted by Poland. Settlers were granted the right to found a settlement (during the process known as *locatio civitatis*), as well as privileges, which imitated the rights of a "mother town" (where towns were concerned). Whereas Poland and Bohemia adopted the Nuremberg, Magdeburg or Lübeck laws, in Hungary, the most often invoked model was initially that introduced by Wallons at Székesfehérvár (the "Fehérvár" law in modern historiography). The Magdeburg law was eventually

<sup>11</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 15–18.

<sup>12</sup> Details at András Kubinyi, "Zur Frage der Deutschen Siedlungen im mittleren Teil des Königreichs Ungarn (1200–1541)," in *Die Deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte*, ed. Walter Schlesinger (Sigmaringen, 1975), pp. 527–566; *A History of Hungary*, pp. 20–21; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 60–61.

<sup>13</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 112; Erik Fügedi, *Castle and Society in Medieval Hungary (1000–1437)* (Budapest, 1986), pp. 57–59.



adopted in Banská Štiavnica and only partially in Buda. Later on, the law into force in Buda gained the upper hand. Privileges varied across towns and were usually conditioned by the local environment.<sup>14</sup>

Urban rights also included self-determination for the community (*universitas*). Each year, it would elect a judge (*judex/iudex, maior villae or villicus*), as its representative, while the local *comes (ispán)* lost all jurisdiction over townspeople and the land granted to them. Along with the judge, townspeople elected a council made up of 12 jurors (*iurati*), with the authority of the two bodies extending over all matters in the community (legal and administrative rights). Afterwards, some towns have a larger council, made up of one hundred members, which took over the right to pick the judge and the jurors. The privilege of the town also entailed commercial provisions, the right to hold weekly market or an annual fair. Specific to privileged towns in Hungary was their right to choose a parish priest, a less frequent occurrence in other European towns. The land that the town spread over and sometimes its surrounding domain belonged to community members, with the king having higher authority over them, by virtue of his rights as a sovereign of the country. In some cases, foundation meant that a group of colonists took residence near an older settlement, which persisted and did or did not merge with the new settlement, whereas, in other cases, it meant that a new town was built from the ground up. From the very beginning, settlers and those coordinating the colonization process instituted a system in their place of destination, by preferring a strict plan to the older, more irregular structure. The land that the town spread over was divided into plots. Owning a plot also conditioned the inclusion in the privileged urban community which, in its turn, granted the owner the right to trade or to practice a craft.<sup>15</sup>

Townspeople were generally exempt from paying customs in a specific territory, which ran from one or two counties to the entire kingdom. Instead, they paid a yearly flat duty (*census* or *taxa*) to the royal treasury, which the judge would distribute to town inhabitants in amounts that varied by their wealth. Later on, townspeople gained the right to impose this duty on noble and clergymen who owned

<sup>14</sup> Györffy, “Les débuts de l'évolution urbaine,” pp. 144–145.

<sup>15</sup> Katalin G. Szende, “Some Aspects of Urban Landownership in Western Hungary,” in *Power, Profit and Urban Land. Landownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns*, eds. Finn-Einar Eliassen and Geir Atle Ersland (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 146–147.

estates within the town perimeter. Some towns had the exceptional right to sentence to death (*ius gladii*) and to have their own, specific laws and procedures (*ius statuendi*), following the model of some Western towns.<sup>16</sup>

The Angevin dynasty, which rose to power early 14th century (in effective rule since 1310), continued the policy of granting liberties to towns, which was in full flight after the Mongol invasion. The 14th and 15th centuries are the prime of medieval urban centers in Hungary. Thriving trade activities were reflected on the rural environment. Hundreds of village markets emerge, where the local population, from noblemen to peasants, exchanged goods or had the possibility to buy from merchants coming from larger towns. These markets evolved into market towns (*oppidum*), with a small number of them becoming towns and obtaining liberties. Market towns of this kind are a feature of Central Europe, and also a part of southern Germany or Austria, where they are named *Markt*. They acted as a trading post and were the economic hub of the region they were located in. Some are simply called *vásárhely*, meaning “place for market”. Their outline and their population placed them halfway between town and village, perhaps closer to the latter (however, they did have a marketplace and more than one street), and were found all across the kingdom, most of them where plain met hill, or where hill met mountain. Some were also local administrative centers. Lacking detailed archaeological research, historians have trouble placing these settlements into hierarchies. One criterion is the size of churches erected by the community (or by the local nobleman), another is the presence of an order of mendicants.<sup>17</sup> For the period leading up to the year 1440, 300 such market towns were identified, as well as other 470 between 1440 and 1526, most of them without privileges. For some, the lords of place, lay or clergymen, gained immunity from the royal and county judges or tax exemptions. Others gained from their respective lords the possibility to pay their duties by a single amount or the right to have a judge and a local council to preside over small matters of litigation. However, they could not

<sup>16</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 19–20; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 112–113, 251–252.

<sup>17</sup> Details in: E. Fügedi, “La formation des villes et les ordres mendiants en Hongrie,” in *Kings, Bishops, Nobles and Burghers in Medieval Hungary*, ed. J. M. Bak (London, 1986), pp. 966–987; A. Kubinyi, “Urbanization in the East-Central Part of Medieval Hungary,” in *Towns in Medieval Hungary*, ed. László Gerevich (Boulder, 1990), pp. 103–149.

appeal to royal judges, like larger towns did. The episcopal towns of Pécs, Veszprém, Eger or Oradea had a higher standing. Although they did not enjoy the right to self-government (since they did not depend on the king, but rather on the local bishop), they were very active economically.<sup>18</sup> A category somewhat distinct from episcopal towns are the areas in certain towns (such as Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Győr etc.), which were held by the local bishopries. In some cases, the episcopal area was completely cut off from the townspeople one, in others, the two components were adjacent. In such cases, jurisdiction was held by both townspeople and bishops, each in the area granted them by the king. In much the same way the urban community claimed its rights based on the royal privilege, bishopries held authority over their part of the settlement based on a royal grant. Customs, taxes, fishing rights, etc, all had been granted by the king to support the bishop and the accompanying clergy, the same as the king had exempted townspeople from certain tolls. Parts of towns held by bishops extended over relatively small areas.<sup>19</sup>

In the layout of towns, some changes in legal scope can be witnessed ever since the latter half of the 14th century. The institution that towns could make an appeal to was represented by *magister tavarnicorum*, an office held by a person designated by the king. This institution was regulated by the law in its respective town, with the support of townspeople. In 1405, by his *decretum minor*, King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437) allowed towns to call upon the court of the town whose law they adhered to (a practice known as *Schöffentuhl*), thereby accepting the importance of the German institution of “mother towns”. The appeal was only possible in extraordinary legal situations (when an inhabitant was displeased with a decision of the council in their hometown), since it was believed that a more experienced court could also be more impartial. Many towns (Debrecen or Bardejov, for instance), had adopted the privilege from Buda, so this acted as a “mother town” for them. In the 15th century, one could still apply for an appeal at a court made up of jurors from several different towns or regional courts

<sup>18</sup> István Petrovics, “Royal Residences and Urban Development During the Reign of the Anjou Kings in Hungary,” *HU*, vol. V, no. 1 (1997), pp. 59–60; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 244–245, 251, 263–264.

<sup>19</sup> Imre Perényi, “Historical Development of Hungarian Cities,” in Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VII, pp. 363–364, 418–419; László Gerevich, “Hungary,” in *European Towns. Their Archaeology and Early History*, ed. M. W. Barley (London, 1977), pp. 447–450.

of law. After 1440, the authority of *magister tavernicorum* was restricted to seven royal towns: Buda, Košice, Pressburg, Sopron, Trnava, Prešov and Bardejov. The need to centralize various legal procedures and practices in towns led to the creation of a common body of laws for royal towns (improperly called *ius tavernicale*, and more accurately *Laws and practices of the Seven Towns*), a modified version of the Buda law. While royal towns gained ampler control over their own courts of law, centers such as Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, and then Szeged and Cluj, were placed under direct royal jurisdiction, being detached from the influence of the great nobles. Where political involvement is concerned, town representatives were not united or avoided adopting a decisive stand and were hence pushed to a lesser position in the grand assemblies of the kingdom. Even if towns were regularly invited in debates of the Diet after 1440, the king often complained of their absence. High attendance costs were prohibitive and assemblies were more often seen as a burden, rather than an honor by townspeople.<sup>20</sup>

Several stages can be identified in Hungary's process of urbanization, with each of them corresponding to approximately one century. Katalin Szende identified these stages as: with a 150–200 year delay from towns in the west, towns proper (in a legal sense) in the kingdom of Hungary emerged in the 13th century, whereas the process of gaining autonomy and creating an independent administration which would deal with jurisdiction in the community, its property rights or the admission of new citizens were more specific to the 14th century. In the next century, the political role of towns is acknowledged, whereas the detailed regulation of town life, including that of corporations created here is specific to the 15–17th centuries.<sup>21</sup>

### *Population, society and economy*

The population in towns was not numerous, with even the largest urban centers having only several thousand inhabitants. In the 15th century, Buda had 8,000 inhabitants (less than Kraków or Prague), but, if we add nearby Pest and Óbuda, population reached around

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<sup>20</sup> Details at Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 127–159; Katalin Szende, “Was There a Bourgeoisie in Medieval Hungary?,” in *The Man of Many Devices*, p. 449.

<sup>21</sup> Szende, “Was There a Bourgeoisie,” p. 455.

15000 inhabitants. Pressburg, Sopron and Košice had around 4–5.000 inhabitants each. Royal towns had predominantly German inhabitants, who were the urban elite, as well as the majority. From the 14th and especially the 15th centuries on, the number of Hungarians increased, they being joined, depending on the region, by Slovaks, Croats, Romanians, Serbs, Ruthenians, as well as Jews.<sup>22</sup>

Urban society was headed by a small group of wealthy families, which had in its grasp the main ruling positions in the settlement, which they sought to pass over to their heirs. Usually, members of this group were among town founders, held significant plots in town or outside (especially vineyards) and married into other families of noblemen. Ever since the latter half of the 14th century, Buda sees a new elite rising, made up of the grand merchants who held close economic and family bonds with the townspeople in Vienna and in southern Germany, especially Nuremberg.<sup>23</sup> In Košice, research showed that until the 15th century included, members of the town council were elected mostly among wealthy German inhabitants, who were the town patriciate. They dealt in trade and had the best houses in town, which were strewn along the central *ring*. Craftsmen and members of the Hungarian community began having a newfound significance only from the latter half of the next century.<sup>24</sup> The elite also included many noblemen from the 15th century on, involved in various businesses. Later on, after the Ottoman threat loomed even larger, the number of noblemen residing in towns increased, excepting Saxon towns in Transylvania, which did not accept noblemen in their ranks. An opposite development existed as well, since some townspeople, after acquiring estates and amassing wealth, turned noblemen. However, it was not the noblemen who were the population “reservoir” for urban centers.

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<sup>22</sup> Maria Bogucka, “The Towns of East-Central Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century,” in *East-Central Europe in Transition. From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Antoni Mańczak, Henryk Samsonowicz, Peter Burke (Cambridge, 1985), p. 98. A population estimate for Hungary, which placed it at around two million inhabitants in the 14th century, was performed by Eric Fügedi. Bohemia supposedly had between two and three million, and Poland, somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million inhabitants (Eric Fügedi, “The Demographic Landscape of East-Central Europe,” in *East-Central Europe in Transition*, pp. 49–50).

<sup>23</sup> For the status of the patriciate of Buda, see Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 87–98.

<sup>24</sup> György Granasztói, “La sociologie du pouvoir dans une ville de Hongrie à la fin du Moyen Âge,” in *Entrepreneurship and the Transformation of the Economy (10th–20th Centuries)*. *Essays in Honour of Herman Van der Wee*, eds. Paul Klep, Eddy Van Cauwenbergh (Leuven, 1994), pp. 147–164.

Lists of townspeople indicate the names of citizens, including those of newcomers, and show that most of the ones in this category actually had their roots in the countryside.<sup>25</sup>

Urban centers in Hungary had only regional economic significance. This can be explained by the fact that towns here did not develop out of trading centers to become production centers, as was the case in Flanders, northern Germany or northern Italy. Their main economic force came from involving the surrounding areas in trade, as well as their taking part in international trade. The Angevin kings also sought to attract into Hungary tradesmen coming from Western and Eastern Europe to reach Vienna, Kraków and Brno. Even so, in order to support towns on the most important trade routes, kings granted or confirmed their staple right (*Stapelrecht*). Esztergom, Buda, Győr and Košice held this right ever since Arpadian rule, whereas Pressburg, Sopron and some towns in Transylvania only received it later on. Sigismund of Luxemburg restricted the staple right of Buda, which was no longer to apply to local merchants. Even so, Buda was no economic match to Vienna.

Whereas, up until the first half of the 14th century, Italian merchants (especially Florentine or Paduan) dominated Hungary's external trade, after this moment, the scales start to tip towards German merchants. Charles Robert (1301–1342) reduced customs duties on merchants from Bohemia and Moravia, trying to provide incentives for trade on a route alternative to that crossing Vienna. King Louis of Anjou (1342–1382) was nevertheless on good terms with Vienna and extended the privileges granted to Bohemian and Viennese merchants in 1366. Viennese merchants also had their privilege for free trade with Hungary (1402) reinforced by King Sigismund. Similar privileges were granted to merchants in Köln (1345), Nuremberg (1357), Regensburg (1359) and Aachen (1369). Despite all the efforts made by Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) until the end of the 15th century, merchants from south Germany, who boasted large capital, had control over Hungary's imports. They brought fabrics and metal tools in the country, exchanging them for metal, livestock or wine.<sup>26</sup> Influential families in Germany set up shop in major towns in Hungary. Up until

<sup>25</sup> Katalin Szende, "Was There a Bourgeoisie," pp. 452–455.

<sup>26</sup> Nagy, "Transcontinental Trade," p. 349. In 1483, Matthias Corvinus revoked the staple rights of Vienna and Pressburg (Rady, *Medieval Buda*, p. 112).

1526, the Hallers of Nuremberg, the Pemfflingers of Styria and the wealthy Fuggers of Augsburg were actively present in Buda. The Fuggers' profit between 1495 and 1526 on businesses in Hungary, partnering with the Thurzós, who helped them monopolize the production and sale of copper, rose to one million florins.<sup>27</sup>

Under these circumstances, if compared with similar centers to the West, towns in Hungary were economically and politically weakened. The central authority was a factor in their development, but only up to a point, since it was mostly interested in obtaining income and did not exempt townspeople from taxes or loans. In an attempt to counterbalance the privileges granted to towns west of the kingdom, the king also granted rights to his own towns, being encouraged to do so by the importance of external trade and the income available therefrom. It was so that in 1405, Sigismund of Luxemburg exempted from royal customs all merchants in towns (the privileged ones), at the same time trying to standardize measures and weights according to the Buda customs.

From the latter half of the 14th century on, a large annual fair became common practice in major towns. Up to that point, only Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Buda, as seats of royalty, could hold such a fair, but King Louis granted similar rights to Pressburg, Sopron and Košice. Under Sigismund's rule, the number of annual fairs and weekly markets was on a rising curve.<sup>28</sup> Even so, the economy in the kingdom did not find its strength in towns, which were major consumers, but from the vast resources of precious metals that the Carpathians hid inside. During the reign of the first Angevins, the mining system was reorganized, and the royal monopoly on gold and silver was introduced as a basis for a new monetary policy.<sup>29</sup> The Hungarian gold florin was the first gold coin to be minted north of the Alps (1326). The exact amount of gold extracted cannot be ascertained, however, Hungary was obviously one of the leading countries in this area at the time. New towns developed around mining operations (*civi-*

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<sup>27</sup> Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Buda between Tatars and Turks," in *Urban Society of Eastern Europe*, p. 153.

<sup>28</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 253.

<sup>29</sup> Oszkár Paulinyi, "The Crown Monopoly of the Refining Metallurgy of Precious Metals and the Technology of the Cameral Refineries in Hungary and Transylvania in the Period of Advanced and Late Feudalism (1325–1700) with data and Output," in *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion. Papers of the XIVth International Congress of the Historical Sciences*, ed. Hermann Kellenbenz (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 27–39.

*tates montanae*): Rodna, Baia Mare, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica etc. The communities in these centers enjoyed autonomy, as well as the right to send their own representatives to the kingdom Diet, a right also held by royal towns, as already mentioned.<sup>30</sup>

Almost every major town had its domain, made up of one or several villages; their inhabitants paid taxes to the town. Along with taxes, the domain provided the town with produce. In mid 15th century, Sopron had seven villages (bought from various noblemen), Trnava four, whereas Košice controlled 17. Buda had no village under its dominion. A specific feature for many Hungarian towns is that they relied not only on trade and mining, but also on winemaking. From the 14th century on, viticulture played an ever-increasing role in the economy of towns like: Esztergom, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Győr, Buda and Pressburg. Between 60 and 80% of the inhabitants owned vineyards in western Hungary. These could be sold, exchanged, leased or mortgaged, be they the property of a townsman, a nobleman or a serf (in this case, the vineyard was leased), thus providing incentives in this field.<sup>31</sup>

In many towns, wine selling brought even more benefits than crafts, which were only secondary in the urban economy and generally covered internal demand. Although crafts seem to be significant in number in some towns (in the 15th century, there were 61 types of crafts in Buda, 52 in Sopron), production was restricted to cheap and daily goods. Only craftsmen who provided luxury items for the elite of the kingdom, such as goldsmiths, had higher social standing. From the 14th century on, craftsmen begin forming guilds, with ten such organizations operating in Buda during Sigismund's reign.<sup>32</sup>

### *Toponymy and topography*

Aside from mining settlements and several fortified towns, which had a certain degree of autonomy, the rest of the towns were unfortified and

<sup>30</sup> Petrovics, "Royal Residences," pp. 44–45; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 247–248, 253.

<sup>31</sup> Laszlo Mákkai, "Economic Landscapes: Historical Hungary from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century," in *East-Central Europe in Transition*, pp. 32–33; Szende, "Some Aspects of Urban Landownership," p. 153.

<sup>32</sup> *A History of Hungary*, p. 29; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 259.



acted as mere trading posts. In documents, the latter are referred to as *oppidum* (*mezőváros*), as opposed to *civitas/civitates*, which were usually the seat of a county with well-defined borders. Counties acted ever since the very beginning as a support for the clerical structure and this brought about the change in terminology here and in Western Europe: *civitas* as a bishopric seat-town. During the Angevin reign, the meaning of this term underwent further change. Documents placed even more emphasis on the meaning of “settlement with walls” for the word, as opposed to *oppidum*, used for unwalled settlements. At the same time, the name of *civitas* continued to be assigned to bishopric seats. Most also partook of the “fortified towns” designation, but there were cases where no walls existed, such as Veszprém (except the castle) or Eger (which had fortifications, but was not made of stone initially).<sup>33</sup>

Topographically, Hungarian towns had a relatively similar situation to those in Poland. From the 13th century, a more regulated outline is deployed in towns, with streets crossing at a right angle and central marketplaces. The layout of buildings in towns was no accident, since grand merchants, members of the urban elite, sought to gain monopoly over the best houses, near the marketplace, hence creating a true “line of social divide”.<sup>34</sup> The town hall, the parish church and the headquarters of guilds, true symbols of the community, were also located in the central marketplace, whereas craftsmen took their trade to the secondary streets, which often borrowed the name of the craft practiced there. In Hungary, few towns could afford or had the right to erect enclosing walls. Estimates place them at less than 20, if we include Transylvania and Slovakia. Faced with the ever-threatening Ottoman presence, but also with a decrease in the number of royal castles, in the same *decretum minor* of 1405, Sigismund of Luxemburg decided that towns could fortify themselves without paying duties to the king. Debrecen and many other market towns or “free villages” were granted urban rights, being required to enclose themselves in walls. The lack of construction materials or economic power led to many settlements to fail to achieve the royal plan. To avoid the burden of paying to erect walls, some townspeople preferred moving to the suburbs.<sup>35</sup> These measures did not lead to an increase in royal

<sup>33</sup> *A History of Hungary*, p. 59; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 40–41, 254.

<sup>34</sup> Granasztói, “La sociologie du pouvoir,” pp. 155–156.

<sup>35</sup> Szende, “Some Aspects of Urban Landownership,” p. 154.

income and eventually had Sigismund reduce the number of privileges granted to towns, and to prefer leaving many market towns in the hands of local nobility.<sup>36</sup>

15th century sources show the existence of a hierarchy among towns in the kingdom. Free royal towns (*liberae civitates regiae*) came first. They could make an appeal to the *magister tavarnicorum* and spread all over the kingdom: Buda, Pest, Pressburg, Trnava, Sopron, Košice and others. The three large Saxon centers in Transylvania stood alongside them: Sibiu, Braşov and Bistriţa, which were not attached to the above-mentioned legal institution. A secondary group of royal towns exists, with fortified settlements such as: Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Zagreb, Visegrád, Krupina, Cluj, but also unfortified ones, such as Szeged, Timişoara or Zvolen. A separate category was that of mining towns in Slovakia and Transylvania, relying on the royal chamber, with some of them enjoying autonomy. The other towns, some fortified (Eisenstadt, Trenčín, Beckov etc.), others—the majority—unfortified, depended on bishops (Veszprém, Eger, Oradea etc.), noblemen or even the king (Komárno, Miskolc, Ráckeve) and queen (Óbuda, Beregovo). Their inhabitants were not seen as freemen and depended on a castellan appointed by the lord of the place.<sup>37</sup>

### *Case studies*

An analysis of towns with the most extended rights shows an uneven distribution across the kingdom. Most were in border areas, as gateways on trade routes bound west (to Austria, Győr, Pressburg and Sopron, and to Moravia and Bohemia, Trnava), north (to Poland, Levoča, Prešov, Košice and Bardejov), and south (to the Adriatic Sea, Zagreb, to Wallachia and Moldavia, Braşov, Sibiu and Bistriţa). In the middle lay economic centers which relied heavily on imports (Székesfehérvár, Oradea), alongside Buda, the royal seat. The most urbanized area was Transdanubia, whereas the towns south and east of the Danube were more sparse.

Of all the towns in the Hungarian kingdom, Buda had the most advanced autonomy. The town was erected after 1244, when German

<sup>36</sup> Perényi, "Historical Development," p. 366.

<sup>37</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 254–255.

colonists settled across the Danube, at Pest, were assisted by the king in moving to a hill beyond the bank, a position much easier to defend against Mongol attacks. The two settlements were here by no accident, since this was where a negotiable ford across the Danube existed. Many important routes in the kingdom passed through here, linking Buda and Pest to Kraków, Prague, Vienna, Zagreb, Belgrade, Timișoara, Brașov etc. The new settlement held briefly the name “the town on the new hill of Pest” (*Civitas Novi Montis Pestiensis*), but it soon was assigned the name of an older settlement up north, near the Roman ruins of Aquincum, which was already named Buda and would later become “Old Buda” (Óbuda). The latter loses importance and becomes a domain of the queen in 1343. Pest would continue to act as a separate town. It had one of the largest animal markets in the kingdom. Until 1300, Buda expanded at a rapid pace, but not without resistance from neighboring towns and religious centers, disgruntled by its growth. Inhabitants of Buda were trying to tamper with the collection of taxes owed to the chapter in Óbuda, also interfering with the same process that Dominican nuns from Rabbit Island performed in the Buda market. Esztergom inhabitants, who enjoyed staple right, were not all too happy themselves to see Buda grow, since more and more merchants went to this town. Since they did not acknowledge the rights of the Church and the staple right that Esztergom enjoyed, inhabitants of Buda were excommunicated no less than six times in the 13th century.<sup>38</sup>

In the latter half of the 13th century, the first royal seat was erected in Buda, which Charles Robert would refer to in 1308 as *civitates nostram principalem*. With an excellent geographical location, Buda became the most important town in medieval Hungary, even though it did not host the royal family at certain times.<sup>39</sup> In Buda, the royal castle was located at the south-eastern end of the hill near the Danube,<sup>40</sup> and, along with the town, created a single structure; however, the two parts were separated strategically by a solid wall. The town outline, the regularity of plots of land and the layout of paved streets and gates suggest that the structure was initially conceived as an urban settlement and not a simple defensive fortification. The area between

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<sup>38</sup> Birnbaum, “Buda,” p. 140.

<sup>39</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 131–133.

<sup>40</sup> Birnbaum, “Buda,” p. 139.

the hill of the settlement and the Danube also depended on the town. As with other major towns in Hungary, Buda was mostly inhabited by Germans, who resided in the centre and in the south side of town. A Hungarian quarter, a Jewish quarter and a group of houses belonging to wealthy Italian merchants who controlled the spice and silk trade existed to the north-west, near Vienna gate. In towns inside the kingdom, Jews resided based on a privilege granted by Bela IV in 1251. They paid a special tax, *census iudeorum*, could not enter craft guilds and could not practice trade, which encouraged them to become usurers. They organized following specific principles, but their actions were also regulated by a “Jew judge”, of Christian creed and royal appointment. The Hungarian population underwent constant growth. When Ottomans conquered the town in the 16th century, Hungarians were predominant. A weekly market was usually held each Saturday near Vienna gate. Two other markets emerge later on, gaining significance: one held on Fridays would develop near the Mary Magdalene church, and another near the present-day Matthias church. Separate markets existed in the suburbs, but also in Óbuda and Pest. Buda and Pest also had the right to hold two yearly fairs, visited by foreign merchants.<sup>41</sup>

Initially, the rights of townspeople were laid down in the privilege granted by Bela IV to inhabitants of Pest in 1244, before moving to the location of present-day Buda. In 1276, Ladislaus the Cuman (1272–1290) reinforced this privilege, which covered the citizens’ right to free election of their representatives, with legal and administrative authority. The mayor, originally called *villicus*, was chosen for one year (and could be reelected) and had executive and legal powers, being helped by the 12 jurors; they were chosen on St George’s day, the 23rd of April. Debates and trials attended by the mayor and council took place in the Town Hall, which was located near the main square of the town. Their activity was not rewarded by a monthly payment. They deducted part of the fines collected in trials. All the town documents, as well as the causes and the trials were drafted and noted in the “town book” (*statpuech*) by a notary, appointed for a one-year term. The notary would apply one of the town seals on papers, since Buda exceptionally had two seals: a double one, with the royal arms on one

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<sup>41</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 42, 82–84.

side and the town symbol (three towers and a gate) on the other, the other seal being simple, with one side, and bearing the town symbol.

The privilege protected the ownership right of the inhabitants over areas inside town, the plots of those dying without inheritors being escheated to the town, and not to the king. Customs exemption was granted, except for the *tricesima* and the taxes for the chapter in Óbuda. The deputy for the royal palace, delegates, servants and even guests visiting the king were not allowed accommodation within town and could not attend trials. Townspeople were forced to provide the king with a number of armed citizens in case of war. The town was otherwise entitled to have its own guards, who acted within town walls and were also charged with maintaining order and spotting possible fires, a common occurrence at the time. The code of law in force in Buda, compiled in German at around 1420 (*Stadtrecht*) and relying extensively on the Magdeburg and Vienna laws, had no less than 403 articles and various provisions, with an emphasis on the rights and obligations of the community. German domination of the town is evidenced by their decision-making power: in the town council, out of 12 members, only two could be Hungarian, while the only inhabitants with an established German origin could be appointed as judge. This situation would gradually change in the first part of the 15th century. Sigismund of Luxemburg moved the royal seat of power to Buda, leading to an increase in number and importance of Hungarians in town. Around 1430, Hungarians and Germans are at odds with each other, as indicated by the accounts of various merchants who visited town. German control over authority in Buda was challenged, which led to an open rebellion in 1439. In 1440, by way of compromise, a balance between the two parties was reached, with each of them having to elect half the members of a larger town council. The judge would be elect German one year, and another, Hungarian.<sup>42</sup> The number of Germans continued to drop, although they had reached a major economic position, altering the already delicate compromise. This is how the mayor and the council came to be elected not by all the citizens, but by a body of 100 persons, half Hungarian, and half German.

The neighboring town of Pest depended on Buda, which appointed its judge and the four jurors representing it. It was only during Sigismund's reign that Pest would regain autonomy, moving on to become

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<sup>42</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 43–54; 106–109.

a separate royal town and heavily fortified under Matthias Corvinus. The horse market held here was well-known. Sources claim up to 2,000 horses a day were sold here.<sup>43</sup>

There were also times when town autonomy was encroached on by the king. At the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the next, a new character emerges in Buda, the *Rector*, appointed by the king and having an office similar to that of the mayor, who is no longer mentioned. His appointment seems to have been connected with the currency reforms initiated by the king, the initial *Rectors* being members of the royal chamber. This office later came under the control of the citizens and lost importance to the one elected by townspeople, referred to as *Richter* or *judex* from the 14th century on.<sup>44</sup> The king's tampering with the rights of the town reoccurred at the end of the 15th century–early 16th century. In 1468, Matthias Corvinus disputed the ban on accommodating guests of royalty in town, and in 1492, Ladislaus II exempted the noblemen residing in Buda from paying taxes to the town. Citizens had to pay new taxes on drinks, millstones or fishing nets. The kings did not interfere with internal institutions in the community, since it was in their interest to increase income which reached the royal chamber, as an economic and political crisis gripped the kingdom.<sup>45</sup> There are several smaller towns which, despite being granted some liberties by the king, were later given to noblemen that the monarch sought to reward for services or to ensure their fealty.<sup>46</sup>

Esztergom, a royal seat and the see for an archbishop was among the first towns to develop in the kingdom of Hungary. The creation of a center for secular and clerical authority here was prompted by its location, near the Danube and at the foot of the Pilis mountains. Ever since Geza's reign, a castle was erected on the hill overlooking the river to serve as a seat for Hungarian leaders, and was later rebuilt several times. The medieval compound on the hill had two components: the royal castle and the archbishopric, with the settlement destined for royal servants developing on lower ground. After the Mongol invasion,

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<sup>43</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 5–6, 46–63; Birnbaum, "Buda," pp. 139–147; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 256, 261.

<sup>44</sup> See also György Székely, "Le développement de la magistrature de la ville de Buda au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Folia diplomatica* (Brno) 1971, pp. 277–293; Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 24–39.

<sup>45</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 115–118.

<sup>46</sup> Szende, "Some Aspects of Urban Landownership," pp. 157–158.

inhabitants in the valley were moved to safer ground, up the hill, and the castle was transferred to the archbishop. The king kept part of it for his own use, and the royal family would often come visit. The area was enclosed with heavy walls. The settlement in the valley did not disappear, but continued to develop, although encumbered by the rights the Church still held in that area (the right to untaxed trade, to hold a market etc.). The growth of Buda, in the adjacent southern region, was the reason why Esztergom went into a slow decline after 1300.<sup>47</sup>

Another major royal seat was located at Székesfehérvár, on an old, important trade route, in use ever since Roman times. It was here that Stephen I erected a basilica in which he placed the treasure hoarded from Bulgars in 1018 and was also buried. It was here that most other kings of Hungary would be buried and enthroned. Near the basilica, a market and a small suburb emerged, the latter being soon enclosed in walls (*civitas interior*). From the 12th century on, groups of Wallons settled outside these walls (as in Esztergom as well), creating a so called “outer town” (*civitas exterior*). In the first part of the 13th century, probably even before the Mongol attack, a part of the population in the suburbs was moved downtown and the street system was rebuilt.<sup>48</sup>

The Sopron area had been inhabited since ancient times as well: the Roman town of Scarbantia existed here, without bearing in any way on the layout of the medieval town. It was likely that at the beginning of the 11th century, by refortifying the ruins of a wall erected by the Romans in the 4th century, a royal castle was built on one area of the present-day inner town. Sopron displays a status different from that of other major towns in the kingdom. Documents mention only *cives* here, and not *hospites*, indicating that the settlement became a town before German colonists arrived, who only joined the existing community. The settlement developed around the castle was declared a town (1277) by privilege from Ladislaus the Cuman.<sup>49</sup> In 1340, a line of walls was erected to protect the town, whose surface continued to increase. A specific feature was that here, as well as in some Ital-

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<sup>47</sup> Perényi, “Historical Development,” pp. 363–364; L. Gerevich, “The Rise of Hungarian Towns along the Danube,” in *Towns in Medieval Hungary*, pp. 28–35.

<sup>48</sup> Gerevich, “Hungary,” pp. 447–450.

<sup>49</sup> Erik Fügedi, *Castle and Society*, pp. 28–31; Szende, “Some Aspects of Urban Landownership,” p. 146.

ian towns, wealthy townspeople erected towers, true symbols of their social standing, but also defensive positions when times were harsh.<sup>50</sup>

Further north, in Győr, two settlements with a different legal status coexisted. One part of the town was organized following a royal privilege granted in 1271 (*civitas regalis*), whereas the other remained under control by the local bishop (*civitas capitularis*). Győr was different from other towns with a similar status, in that the two components were not separated by a wall and formed a single topographic unit.<sup>51</sup>

The southern half of the kingdom, especially the Puszta area, was not so vastly populated by towns. In the Angevin period, the urbanization process grows more intense, with towns such as Slankamen, Eng and Sremska Mitrovica coming into existence. Their inhabitants were winemakers and sellers. Three commercial centers stand out: Pécs, Szeged and Timișoara. Belgrade also came under control by Hungarian kings at various points in history. Although relatively close to the Balkans in the 14th–15th centuries, documents reveal that inhabitants in this region preferred importing goods arriving through Buda or dealing in livestock trade.<sup>52</sup>

Although a bishopric town, the community in Pécs enjoyed a relatively generous privilege. The bishopric here had been established by Stephen I in 1009, and the first few *hospites latini*, arriving from the French-German language border, are mentioned in an 1181 document. Germans arrived only later, around 1330, and became the main ethnic presence in town. Croats joined these groups, and had their own street. After the Mongol invasion, the town was fortified by walls, which spanned a relatively large area, not entirely built over. The land around the bishop's castle was used for agriculture for a long time. Although never a royal town, Pécs, like Oradea to the north, displayed a very consistent commercial activity. Pécs hosted a more particular event in 1367: a university was opened here.<sup>53</sup>

Located where Mureș river joined the Tisza, Szeged became a royal town in the latter half of the 15th century, later than other major towns in the kingdom. This is also why the town was not enclosed

<sup>50</sup> Perényi, "Historical Development," p. 367; Imre Holl, "The Development and Topography of Sopron in the Middle Ages," in *Towns in Medieval Hungary*, pp. 96–102.

<sup>51</sup> D. Gabler, E. Szónzi, P. Tomka, "The Settlement History of Győr (Arrabona) in the Roman Period and in the Middle Ages," in *Towns in Medieval Hungary*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>52</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 258.

<sup>53</sup> Perényi, "Historical Development," pp. 374–375.



in defensive walling in the Middle Ages. Its population was made up mostly of Hungarians. Germans preferred settling in towns in the middle, western and northern areas of the kingdom, but not in the south. A castle was erected here probably before 1241, but specific data on it exists since 1321. Its surface was unusually large when considering other castles in the kingdom (over 12.5 acres). The town was further south, away from the swamps of the Tisza. Until 1543, when it fell under Ottoman rule, it had become one of the largest and most populated towns in the kingdom (around 8.000 inhabitants). The lack of fortifications allowed it to reach over a large territory, since the street which linked together neighborhoods north to south in the town had over 3 km. The town had four areas until the 15th century, initially separate: Szeged or Palánk (the modern name)—the initial town—, the Lathran area, as well as neighboring Felszeged and Alszeged. The Szeged community received ever since the latter half of the 13th century the privilege to hold weekly markets, most likely on Mondays. Other markets existed in Felszeged and Alszeged, whereas the Lathran area would host, after 1499, a yearly fair. Thanks to the town's location in Pannonia, the townspeople focused especially on cattle trade, and some of them were also mentioned in north Italy.<sup>54</sup>

A former county center, Timișoara attracted royal attention early 14th century, when Charles Robert of Anjou, displeased with the hostility of townspeople in Buda and because the central and northern parts of the kingdom were controlled by the nobility, preferred to reside here (1315–1323), in a region where he had more supporters. The presence of a royal residence provided a massive incentive in the development of the town. Work on the fortress with the royal seat, which had been rebuilt with stone walls, required the presence of many craftsmen. The first few “guests” are mentioned in 1341 (*hospites de Themeswar*), but little is known about them to this day. The town community had the right to elect a *judex* and *iurati cives*, but its autonomy was limited by the presence and the authority of the Timișoara *comes*, who was also an authority figure in the area ever since the end of the 14th century. The *comes* who held this function (Filippo Scolari and Pavel Knez among them) was directly involved in defending the southern border of the kingdom from the Ottoman threat, which also had an impact on the development of the town. Timișoara had the

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<sup>54</sup> Kubinyi, “Urbanization,” pp. 111–118.

right to regular markets on Saturday, and the tradesmen in town stood out in the fabric trade. In 1552, Timișoara is conquered and attached to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>55</sup>

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Until 1541, towns in Slavonia, Croatia, Slovakia (formerly a part of Great Moravia)<sup>56</sup> and Transylvania developed in the political, economic, social and religious environment provided by the kingdom of Hungary, which these regions were a part of. This is why these towns displayed no major differences, but only specific features determined by their area. Larger towns had a predominantly German population, along with Croats in Slavonia and Croatia and Hungarians in some towns in Slovakia and Transylvania. However, suburbs and smaller market towns were inhabited by such a more diverse ethnical mix: Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats, Romanians, Serbs or Ruthenians.

South of the kingdom, from the 13th century on, especially after 1241, a number of settlements based on trade or small crafts emerge, among which Križevci, Koprivnika, Varaždin, Vukovar or Samobor stand out. Not all these towns were granted privileges.<sup>57</sup> The most important town in Slavonia was where Zagreb is nowadays. From the end of the 11th century on, after this territory was conquered by Hungarians, a bishop's see was created here (1091–1095), with a settlement emerging as well nearby (Kaptol), where servants and people dependent on the bishopric lived. In 1198, the future King Andrew II, then *herzog* of Dalmatia and Croatia, issued a privilege for the bishop, whose authority was thereby confirmed over the inhabitants of Kaptol, then, Hungarians, "Latins" (Italian colonists) and Slavs. The three ethnical groups would also occupy the commercial suburbs emerging

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<sup>55</sup> István Petrovics, "The Fading Glory of a Former Royal Seat: the Case of Medieval Temesvár," in *The Man of Many Devices*, pp. 530–534.

<sup>56</sup> The political and geographic concept of *Slovakia* is only recent; it is first noted in a petition for emperor Franz Joseph in 1849 (Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia. The Struggle for Survival* (New York, 1995), p. 9).

<sup>57</sup> Stanko Guldescu, *History of Medieval Croatia* (Haga, 1964), p. 278; Sima Ćirković, D. Kovačević-Kojić, "L'Économie naturelle et la production marchande aux XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles dans les régions actuelles de la Yougoslavie," *Balkanica* (Belgrade) vol. XIII–XIV (1982–1983), pp. 48–49.

nearby, called Gradec (*Grech*). They are complemented here by a fourth group, that of German colonists.<sup>58</sup>

1242 was the year when the legal status of Zagreb underwent a transformation. After the Mongols devastated the area, Bela IV granted the suburbs a privilege. The royal charter included the king's wish to "found a free town" (*libera regia civitas in Zagrabia, in monte Grech*), with "guests" being called on "to reinforce and fortify this part of the kingdom". Principles laid down in this document are not different from those in similar documents given to towns in medieval Hungary: townspeople were free to elect their representatives and could administer town lands as they pleased. Tax exemptions were granted, but only if a number of men at arms were provided in case of conflict. The latter obligation was eliminated in 1266, when it was decreed that the city pay 40 silver marks yearly. It was in 1266 as well that Bela IV instated chamberlain Archynus as judge for the town, generating opposition from the inhabitants, discontent that their right to free elections was being violated. The king eventually gave in and again confirmed the rights of all the townspeople. The bishop kept under his command the settlement at Kaptol, near the bishop's cathedral, whereas the Croatian ban received symbolic gifts from the inhabitants of Gradec, but only when taking office. The two settlements were separated only by a river, but each had its walls, status and economy. The tithe that the townspeople of Gradec had to pay their bishop residing in Kaptol was a permanent source of contention, as were the taxes levied on merchants in Kaptol by those in Gradec. In the mean time, a fierce rivalry developed between the two communities, and it often ended in violent conflict.<sup>59</sup> A specific feature was that the four separate communities in Gradec ("Latins", Hungarians, Germans, and "Slavs") had equal rights and shared authority over the settlement. Each party assigned two judges and four jurors, the town council being made up of 24 members over a certain period (in the 14th century). However, this number fluctuated. In 1461, there were 19 members, and in 1465, no less than 33, indicating that there was argument over it between the communities.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> John V. A. Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans. A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Ann Arbor, 2006), pp. 73–75.

<sup>59</sup> Guldescu, *History of Medieval Croatia*, pp. 277–279; Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>60</sup> Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans*, p. 75.

Zagreb was initially of lesser importance than larger towns like Buda, Pressburg or Trnava. It gained importance due to the presence of merchants from Venice who came all the way here, the town being located on the road connecting Pannonia to Italy. The vast number of merchants led to no less than three annual fairs being held here from 1372 on.<sup>61</sup> After the kingdom of Hungary collapsed, the town succeeded in avoiding Ottoman rule and came under Habsburg rule.<sup>62</sup>

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Before being conquered by Hungarians, Great Moravia had a series of settlements already in their pre-urban stages.<sup>63</sup> In this territory, inhabited by West Slavs, fortified encampments developed along the rivers, as tribal settlements and trading posts for the surrounding areas (at Preslav, future Pressburg, Nitra, etc.).<sup>64</sup> Slovakia's territory was quick (after 907) to come under the rule of Hungarians settling in Pannonia. Between the 11th and the 12th centuries, a number of castles were erected for royal representatives or new landlords, many in continuation of older fortifications or Slav settlements: Pressburg, Nitra, Tekov, etc. Outside the walls of these castles, marketplaces developed. It was here as well that the renewal of trade and roads played a major role. More importance is given to roads linking Buda to Poland, those coming along the valleys of the Hornád and Torysa rivers, the "Bohemian road", linking Galician Rus' to Bohemia etc.<sup>65</sup> Signs of an increasing trade activity are kept in 11th century–early 12th century sources, in which terms indicating settlements involved in trade appear: *suburbium*, *mercatus* or *forum*. The third seems to have been preferred. From 1206 on, the *forum liberum* phrase features in documents, indicating a change of status for certain market towns, which begin receiving tax

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<sup>61</sup> Desanka Kovačević-Kojić, "Le développement économique des agglomérations urbaines sur le territoire actuel de la Yougoslavie du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Actes du II<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des études du sud-est européen*, tom II, *Histoire* (Athens, 1972), p. 169.

<sup>62</sup> For the history of Zagreb, see Klaus-Detlev Grothusen, *Entstehung und Geschichte Zagrabs bis zum Ausgang des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1967); the 1242 and 1266 privileges at p. 276 and 279.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Marsina, "Pour l'histoire des villes en Slovaquie au Moyen Age," *Studia Historica Slovaca*, vol. VIII (1975), pp. 23–25.

<sup>64</sup> Jiří Hrůza et al., "Development of the Historical Towns of Czechoslovakia," in Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VII, pp. 126–127.

<sup>65</sup> Hrůza, "Development," p. 134.

exemptions (Guerla, Svätý Jur). The term *burgum* (“town”) features in a papal act from 1221 concerning Pressburg, and was not used in local sources. Historians believe that, at the turn of the 13th century, only four settlements had developed towards urban-like agglomerations: Nitra, Pressburg and probably Trenčín and Banská Štiavnica. King Bela IV’s policy of promoting towns is also reflected in Slovakia. Trnava is one of the first few settlements receiving a charter which acknowledged its status as a town (1238), and was followed by Starý Tekov (1240). It is believed that Zvolen and Krupina had received privileges, but since documents were destroyed during the Mongol invasion, the king renewed them later on.<sup>66</sup> As with the rest of the Hungarian kingdom, urbanization expands after the devastating Mongol forays. Incentives for colonization are also provided here. A good example is the large royal forest of Zvolen. Bela IV allotted land in this region, with over 28 villages being created until the end of the century. Seven communities received or had their urban rights renewed over three decades: Zvolen (probably confirmed, 1243), Krupina (probably confirmed, 1244), Košice (around 1247–1248), Nitra (1248), Banská Štiavnica (before 1255), Banská Bystrica (1255) and Komárno (1265), all on “royal land”.<sup>67</sup> In the area, around 30 settlements became towns following these freedom charters. The reasons the king granted privileges are the same as in the rest of the kingdom. He sought to: encourage the arrival of foreign colonists, especially in mines; increase royal income; ensure the loyalty of noblemen with land grants. Versions of the German law, adopted from Hungarian towns (Buda or Székesfehérvár), were also imposed in Slovakia. In the 14th century, the number of towns receiving privileges from secular and religious lords or royal officials increases. Older towns now become a model of organization for newer ones. Prešov becomes a royal town in 1374 and takes over elements of law used in Spiš and Buda, whereas Bardejov adopts the Košice and Buda system in 1376. In the next century, the number of small towns increases, followed by centers that could host annual fairs.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Marsina, “Pour l’histoire des villes,” pp. 27–32.

<sup>67</sup> Hruza, “Development,” p. 154; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 113.

<sup>68</sup> Marsina, “Pour l’histoire des villes,” pp. 42–43, 55; the Magdeburg law was translated into Czech in 1473, at Žilina (Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, p. 56). For the extent of the *locatio* process in northern Hungary, see Körmeny, *Melioratio terrae*.

In Slovakia, many of the mining towns belonging to the kingdom of Hungary developed: Krupina, Banská Štiavnica, Banská Bystrica and Kremnica. In the mines, German settlers were very important, since they brought a much more advanced mining technique and distribution of labor. Jan Thurzó, who partnered with the Fugger company and ran a large part of the mines in Slovakia settled in Banská Bystrica at the turn of the 16th century.<sup>69</sup>

A heightened trade with Bohemia, Poland and Russia led to an unprecedented economic growth in towns in Slovakia between the 14th and the 15th centuries. Pressburg soon becomes the second most important town in the kingdom, favored by its location near the Danube, on the old road that linked Buda to Vienna and Regensburg. Košice did not fall behind and was on its way to become the third most important town in the kingdom in the 15th century. Košice, Pressburg, Bardejov and Levoča enjoyed staple rights.<sup>70</sup>

The privilege charters set the level of autonomy for the community here, as in the rest of the kingdom. They were administrated by a *villicus*, *judex* or *maior villae*, elected for a one year term by townspeople, some privileges stating that he was required to come before the king, who confirmed him. The leader of the community had legal powers, which varied depending on the situation: in some towns, such as Krupina, he could preside over all the causes brought before him. In others, such as Jasov, he was limited to small matters, and was joined by a judge appointed by the king or by the ruler of the county (*comes/ispán*, also referred to as *zupan* here). In the area, the body of jurors is certified in the 13th century only in four cases: Trnava, Krupina, Nitra and Pressburg. Mentions regarding the council of 12 jurors multiply in the 14th century.<sup>71</sup> Charters granted towns other rights as well: that of keeping all taxes levied on the market, of choosing their own parish priest, of exchanging old currency with new one (at Trnava, under the supervision of the ruler of the community), of exploiting subterranean resources (unrestricted, at Jasov; regulated by certain taxes at Banská Bystrica), of free fishing and hunting, etc. Townspeople also had obligations toward the king or the religious ruler. In Zvolen and Krupina, privileges did not state any tax had to be paid by inhabitants.

<sup>69</sup> Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> Hruža, "Development," p. 155; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 257, 259.

<sup>71</sup> Marsina, "Pour l'histoire des villes," pp. 34–35.

In other towns, a land tax (*terragium*) was collected, usually a flat tax for everyone. The tax originated in the settlers' duty of paying the king a sum for settling on "royal land". In mining towns, the tax was not levied, the king keeping income derived from mining. As elsewhere, a significant place in privilege charters was held by military duties, towns being required to provide the king with a number of men at arms and weapons: 12 men at arms in Nitra, one for a hundred homes in Krupina and Starý Tekov.<sup>72</sup> Ever since end 14th century, towns in the Slovakian area concluded agreements to protect their political and economic liberties: an alliance was concluded by the mining towns of Banská Bela, Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica, Nova Bana and Banská Bystrica, whereas another was concluded between the trade centers of Bardejov, Košice, Sabinov and Levoča (*Pentapolis*).<sup>73</sup>

Where the Danube entered the kingdom, at a point where roads and rivers crossed, the town of Pressburg developed. This was originally a Slav fortified settlement, that the Hungarians took over and turned into a castle after 907. In 1291, the settlement developing nearby received a freedom charter from Andrew III (1290–1301). Winemaking and selling played an important part in the development of the town, since the 1291 charter exempted townspeople planting new vineyards from taxes. Townspeople received the right to regulate their laws, using legal procedures of their own.<sup>74</sup> Like other towns in the kingdom, Pressburg, and Košice as well, were dominated by Germans. In the 1261–1332 period, of the 63 inhabitants of Košice whose names are known, 48 are of certain German origin. German names are also predominant in the town council.<sup>75</sup> In some smaller towns, the number and the economic weight of Slovaks is on the rise, a process confirmed by the king himself. In 1381, Louis of Anjou grants the *Privilegium pro Slavis*, that gives Slovaks in Žilina rights equal to those of Germans in the town. As in Buda later on, they were to fill half the number of jurors, but the mayor would be elected alternatively: one year a German, and one year a Slovak. At Kremnica, it was only in 1516 that Slovaks were granted the right to buy houses in town. In the 15th century, along Latin (the official language), towns used German, Hungarian, but also Czech and Slovak. Groups of Jews lived in Nitra and Trnava, however,

<sup>72</sup> Marsina, "Pour l'histoire des villes," pp. 36–42.

<sup>73</sup> Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>74</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, p. 20; Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, p. 51.

<sup>75</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, p. 17.

the Jews in Pressburg enjoyed special status. The town charter decreed that they enjoyed the same rights as other inhabitants.<sup>76</sup>

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Urban centres in Transylvania are of particular interest to us because of the close economic and political links they had with towns in Wallachia and Moldavia. For the time before the conquest of Transylvania by the Hungarians, archaeological research revealed traces of fortifications where local leaders in the area resided. Pre-urban settlements developed near some of them: Morisena (Cenad), Biharea, Cuvin, Dăbâca, Alba Iulia, Cluj-Mănăştur, Oradea. Recent research showed that some of them remained under the control of local population even after Hungarian rule was instated, until early 13th century (the case of Medieş).<sup>77</sup>

Some of the pre-urban settlements became county centres or bishop's sees and gradually became towns after the 13th century. Others fell to ruin, surviving simply as villages under the control of nobles or the Church.<sup>78</sup> Since the land of Transylvania was part of the Roman Empire, some of the medieval towns emerged where older Roman settlements existed (Cluj, Alba Iulia). Their continuity has to do only with topography and habitation, and not urban dwellings per se. Medieval towns did not adopt the names of Roman towns. The arrival of colonists (*hospites*) provided incentive for the economy of the area, contributing in urbanization. Some newcomers were settled in boundary areas, where they had military duties.<sup>79</sup> Historians have yet to agree on the areas settlers came from. Linguistic, ethnographic and archaeological research led to the conclusion they came from Flanders, Wallonia, and other areas of the German Empire (from western Rheinland and Franconia). The favoured targets for colonisation were south, central, and north-eastern Transylvania. Even though they came from relatively different regions, German settlers living in Transylvania received

<sup>76</sup> Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, pp. 46, 54–56.

<sup>77</sup> Şerban Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea între cruciată şi imperiul mongol* (Bucharest, 1993), pp. 72–74.

<sup>78</sup> Mircea Rusu, "Aspecte ale genezei târgurilor şi oraşelor medievale din Transilvania," *HU*. vol. II, no. 1 (1994), pp. 24–41.

<sup>79</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică. Fortificaţii şi cetăţi din Transilvania şi teritoriile învecinate (sec. XIII–XVI)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2005), pp. 402–404.



and adopted the generic name of *sasi* over time. This was contributed by the fact that the late comers (but also the most numerous) included settlers originating in Saxony.<sup>80</sup> Since he sought to consolidate his foothold in Transylvania, the Hungarian king took a direct interest in supporting colonisations. In the eastern parts of the province, the Szeklers were set up, a group whose ethnic origin is not all too clear (fragments of Kabar-Khazar tribes?).<sup>81</sup> Unlike the Saxons, the Szeklers had no urban tradition and did not create major towns in the lands where they settled.

A special feature is that Germans in Transylvania were part of an ample wave of rural colonisation, which later took on an urban colour. Their favoured area to settle is in southern parts of the province, which feature however as *deserta* in royal papers. The area was not deserted, since it was inhabited by Romanians, who had their lands later added to the royal domain.<sup>82</sup> A similar situation can be found in Slovakia, discussed above. The first among the major documents regulating relations between the Saxons and the king is the so-called *Andreanum*, issued by King Andrew II in 1224.<sup>83</sup> As the relations between the king and Teutonic knights (settled in 1211 in Burzenland) became more tense, the Saxons had a vast autonomy guaranteed for them. It relied on legal rights, an organization different from that in the rest of the Transylvanian voivodeship (by dismantling counties) and direct royal jurisdiction, with right to seal.<sup>84</sup> The only higher legal authorities were to be the *comes* in Sibiu and the king (who appointed the *comes*). The Saxons were divided into seven seats (*sedes*) located on royal land (*fundus regius*), with

<sup>80</sup> Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. I, 2nd ed. (Cluj, 1972), pp. 115–121; Thomas Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1992), pp. 100–102.

<sup>81</sup> *The History of Transylvania*, vol. I, eds. Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Năgler (Cluj-Napoca, 2005), p. 221.

<sup>82</sup> Romanian and Hungarian historians have long debated the existence of Romanians in Transylvania prior to the 12th century. Since this controversy, which has also taken a nationalist turn, does not fall into the scope of our work, we would prefer not to express any opinion on it. Recent years have seen more neutral works being published: Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen* and *The History of Transylvania*, vol. I. For relations between the Hungarians and the Romanians in the Middle Ages, also see Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Romanians and Hungarians from the 9th to the 14th century. The Genesis of the Transylvanian Medieval State* (Cluj-Napoca, 1996).

<sup>83</sup> DÎR, XI–XIII, C, I, p. 208, doc. 157.

<sup>84</sup> Following these changes, the voivode of Transylvania, appointed by the king, was to have authority only over seven counties: Interior Solnoc, Dăbâca, Cluj, Hunedoara, Târnava, Turda și Alba (*The History of Transylvania*, p. 254; Enikő Rüszt-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile și îndatoririle orașelor din Transilvania voievodală* (Cluj-Napoca, 2003), pp. 146–147).

their centre in Sibiu.<sup>85</sup> Instead, the king received 500 silver marks per year and 100 or 500 men-at-arms, as the situation required. The Saxons had to provide accommodation three times a year for the king, and two times for the voivode of Transylvania. The document also included economic provisions: Saxon merchants who brought merchandise into the kingdom were exempted from taxes, and the marketplaces they held were exempted as well.<sup>86</sup> Eight seats emerged, ultimately: Sibiu, Sebeş, Cincu, Rupea, Orăştie, Nocrich, Miercurea Sibiului and Sighişoara. In 1402, King Sigismund merged the seats of Mediaş and Şeica (inhabited by Saxons as well) with them; the two seats had formed the county of Mediaş up to then, directly dependent on royal authority. The Saxons settled in Bistriţa and Rodna, as well as Braşov, were divided into districts and had a separate organization to that of Germans in Sibiu. Groups of Germans also settled outside the Saxon seats and districts, as they did in Cluj. In 1316, Charles Robert extracted the settlement here from the jurisdiction of the Transylvania bishopric and granted it legal town status. Following the privilege passed in 1405 by Sigismund of Luxemburg, Cluj becomes a royal town. From the 15th century on, the Hungarians in town multiplied since here, as well as in Buda, it was decided that the judge of the town should be elected alternatively, one year among the Saxons and another among the Hungarians.<sup>87</sup> The Saxon community had its privileged status consolidated in 1486, when Matthias Corvinus consented to their administrative and legal unification by creating the *Universitas Saxonum*. This higher institution included all Saxon inhabitants on royal land and was headed by the *comes Saxonum*, residing in Sibiu. On several occasions, this position was held by the voivode of Transylvania. The Saxon University assembled yearly in one or two assemblies, adopting decisions in matters of general interest.<sup>88</sup>

Relying on royal privileges, the major Saxon settlements ascended to town status. The next step was to fortify them, a process triggered in the 14th century and intensified once the Ottoman threat heightened. Large towns, such as Braşov, Sebeş, Sighişoara, Cluj or Mediaş were walled in. The most extended fortifications were in Sibiu, where

<sup>85</sup> Năgler, *Aşezarea saşilor*, pp. 215–216.

<sup>86</sup> Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>87</sup> *Istoria Clujului*, ed. Ştefan Pascu (Cluj, 1974), pp. 82–96; Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 88–89, 100–102.

<sup>88</sup> *The History of Transylvania*, pp. 219–224, 256–257; Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. I, p. 122.

the outer wall reached 3400 metres in length.<sup>89</sup> By outline and aspect, major towns in Transylvania looked like similar centres in Central and Western Europe: they had a marketplace with a cathedral in their middle, the town hall, as well as the stores and the workshops of merchants and craftsmen.<sup>90</sup> Since only Germans had the right to settle in towns (and Hungarians as well, in certain instances), the Romanians, the predominant population in Transylvania, populated the suburbs outside the walls. This was the case of Șchei, near Brașov. Large towns had their own domains: Cluj controlled 9 villages, Sibiu, 18, Brașov, 13, and Bistrița had a district with 13 villages attached to it.<sup>91</sup> Brașov was the most populated medieval Transylvanian town, having up to 10.000 inhabitants together with its suburbs. Sibiu and Cluj were next, with up to 8.000, while Sighișoara and Bistrița had around 3000 inhabitants.<sup>92</sup> There were also many unfortified market towns, inhabited by Germans, Hungarians, and Romanians: Miercurea Sibiului, Miercurea Ciuc, Târgul Secuiesc-Mureș, Târgul Secuiesc-Toria, Hațeg, Făgăraș, Aiud, Cisnădie, Reghin, Zalău etc.<sup>93</sup> Some of them would become towns barely in the modern age.

Towns in Transylvania followed the hierarchy of urban centres in the rest of the kingdom of Hungary. The most influential were the royal towns, Brașov, Sibiu, Bistrița, later joined by Cluj. Mining towns were next, subordinated to the royal chamber: Rodna, where gold and silver were extracted, but Turda, Dej, Sic, and Cojocna as well, together with Ocna Sibiului, a salt mine. Among them, Rodna had the most ample autonomy.<sup>94</sup> Alba Iulia was among bishop's towns, hosting the see of the bishop of Transylvania.

<sup>89</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. II, pp. 166–186; Paul Niedermaier, “Dezvoltarea urbanistică și arhitectonică a unor orașe transilvănene din sec. al XII-lea până în sec. al XVI-lea,” in *Studii de istorie a naționalității germane și a înfrățirii ei cu națiunea română*, vol. I, ed. L. Bányai (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 184–195.

<sup>90</sup> Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VIII, *Urban Development in Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Romania and the U.S.S.R.*, pp. 115–119; Heinz Stoob, “Die Mittelalterliche Städtebildung im Karpatenborgen,” in *Die Mittelalterliche Städtebildung im Südöstlichen Europa*, ed. Heinz Stoob (Köln, Wien, 1977), pp. 199–211; details in Paul Niedermaier, *Siebenbürgische Städte. Forschungen zur städtebaulichen und architektonischen Entwicklung von Handwerksorten zwischen dem 12. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Köln, Wien, 1979).

<sup>91</sup> Ștefan Pascu, Samuil Goldenberg, “Despre orașele medievale din unele țări dunărene,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj*, vol. XIV (1971), p. 40.

<sup>92</sup> *The History of Transylvania*, pp. 262–263.

<sup>93</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. II, pp. 137–153; Paul Niedermaier, “Evoluția rețelei de orașe în Transilvania medievală,” *HU*, vol. I, no. 1 (1993), p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. I, p. 235. Like in Serbia or Bosnia, the mines of Rodna also had miners from the area of Spiš (N. Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*

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Some obvious transformations in the status of Hungarian towns can be noticed at the end of the 15th century and especially in the early years of the next one. Italian towns shifted their focus in trade toward West, and the great geographical discoveries and their effects led to a gradual decrease in importance for traditional trade routes in Central Europe.<sup>95</sup> A much larger impact was that of the Ottomans arriving at the Danube. Ever since the end of the 14th century, their permanent attacks and skirmishes had as their chief consequence the decline of towns in the south part of the kingdom. Many were conquered, others were reduced to simple villages or even disappeared. Only Zagreb and several Croat centers succeeded in surviving unconquered. The defeat of Hungarian armies at the hands of the Turks in Mohács, 1526, the civil war which ensued, but also the religious Reform had dramatic effects on towns. Debt-ridden, the German inhabitants of Buda and other towns sought refuge north and west, the urban economy being severely impacted. The 1541 conquest of Buda by Suleiman I ended the existence of the kingdom of Hungary, the towns in south and central Pannonia being integrated in the town system of the empire and taking on a markedly Oriental aspect and organization. Buda and Pest became mere Ottoman garrisons. Towns north and west entered a new stage in their development and came under Habsburg rule. Even under these circumstances, they were permanently threatened by Ottoman attacks, which led to their development being interrupted. Urban centers in Transylvania continued to function in the new principality here and acted as intermediates to the Ottoman-Habsburg trade.<sup>96</sup>

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*conservés dans les manuscrits turcs de la Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris*, vol. II (Paris, 1964), pp. 60–62)

<sup>95</sup> The Hungarian historian Zsigmond Pál Pach has suggested a compelling theory, which goes against the general trend that sees great geographical discoveries as the ones that sapped trade relations between Western, Central, and Eastern Europe (Zsigmond Pál Pach, “The Shifting of International Trade Routes in the 15th–17th Centuries,” *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest) vol. XIV, no. 3–4 (1968), pp. 287–321; Zsigmond Pál Pach, “Levantine Trade Routes to Hungary 15th–17th Centuries,” *Acta Historica. Revue de l’Académie des Sciences de Hongrie* (Budapest) vol. 33 (1987), pp. 57–65).

<sup>96</sup> Peter Csendes, “Urban Development and Decline on the Central Danube, 1000–1600,” in *Towns in decline, AD 100–1600*, ed. T. R. Slater (Burlington, 2000), pp. 149–150.



## CHAPTER THREE

### TOWNS SOUTH OF THE DANUBE

#### *Towns in Serbia, Bosnia and on the Dalmatian coast*

Unlike towns in Poland and Hungary, urban centres in the south-Danube area do not share their features with any counterparts. The reason: two major cultures collided here, bringing specific, but also common forms of manifestation: the West (Latin) and the Byzantine (Greek). The migrations of German and Slav peoples between the 4th and the 7th centuries left an indelible mark on the land where Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup> or Bulgaria stand today. Urban life only endured in the coastal areas of Dalmatia, the towns here owing their survival to the economic and political contact with the Byzantine Empire. Outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, the western Balkans enticed other powers all throughout the Middle Ages: the empire of Charlemagne, the kingdom of Hungary, Venice, the Serbian kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, all of them ruling the area, more or less briefly. This is why historians divide towns in this area into several groups: towns developing as influenced by the Italian urban model (in Dalmatia), by the Byzantine one (in lands owned by the empire) to which are added, as a specific feature, mining towns (in Serbia and Bosnia), created under the influence of the Central-European model.<sup>2</sup>

Urban life south of the Danube was subjected to many political, ethnic, social, and religious changes. From the 7th century on, large groups of Slavs migrated here and changed the ethnic face of the central and northern area of the Balkans, slowly but steadily. Another major moment is that when Bulgars set foot here, a Turkic people who dominated the entire eastern half of the peninsula. The Romanic

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<sup>1</sup> The name Herzegovina came into use under Ottoman rule, from the 16th century on. It is derived from the title of “herzog” that the ruler of the land, Stefan Vukčić, had in the 15th century (Sima M. Ćirković, *The Serbs* (Malden, 2004), p. 111).

<sup>2</sup> *Guide internationale d'Histoire urbaine*, I, *Europe*, ed. Philippe Wolff (Paris, 1977), p. 509.

population did not vanish altogether, but was forced to seek refuge on higher ground, where it lived on and later played its part in the emergence of new states. The conversion of southern Slavs to Christianity that had begun in the 8th–9th centuries had far-reaching historical consequences, since some of the peoples in the western area of the peninsula preferred the missionaries sent by Franks and by the bishop of Rome, whereas Slav tribes occupying the central and the eastern areas (and Bulgars as well), came under the influence of Constantinople. The conversion did not however suppress the rivalry between Bulgars and Byzantines, which climaxed in a series of wars and the destruction of the first Bulgarian empire by Basil II (976–1025), in 1018. This victory led to a restoration of the empire's authority all the way to the Danube.

A small part of towns in this area had survived and served as Byzantine outposts or bishop's sees. Bulgarian and Hungarian attacks had brought them to ruin. The return of the Byzantine army and administration led to a rebound in urban life in southern and eastern Serbia, some of the new towns being a continuation of older, Roman towns. Belgrade rose atop the ancient Singidunum, Braničevo occupied Viminacium, Niš was created where Naissus once existed, and Skopje continued Scupi. Enduring place names show a streak of continuity in most of these centres.<sup>3</sup> This was not the case in western Serbia, in Bosnia or in Montenegro, where continuity cannot be verified and is also not marked by the restoration of former Byzantine centres on the ruins of older Roman towns. The Byzantine Empire imposed its own structures, and the above-mentioned towns (and Ragusa as well) became the seats for more recent *themae*. Urbanization was, however, uneven, since these towns were chiefly considered seats of political power, being first of all garrisons and only secondly religious and economic centres. The foundation acts for the archbishopric of Ohrid given by emperor Basil II in 1018 and 1020 show an uneven distribution of towns this side of the empire. Even though the Byzantine state spanned all the way to the Danube and Sava, it may be noticed that bishop's sees were predominantly set in monasteries, and not in towns.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria a Comparative Study Across the Early Frontier* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 98–99.

The towns indicated previously and several new ones, such as Ras, were an exception. This lasted until the 13th century.<sup>4</sup>

Political changes had a decisive impact on how towns evolved south of the Danube. The Great Schism of 1054 had local rulers outside direct Byzantine authority choose between Rome and Constantinople. At the end of the 11th century, Hungarians subjected Slavonia (1091–1095) and Croatia and Dalmatia (1102–1107) to their rule. It was not long before Bosnia came under Hungarian influence as well. It would regain a relative independence only at the end of the 13th century.<sup>5</sup> In the same period, in the southern part of Serbia, a number of princes (*župans*) appeared as loyal subjects to the Byzantine Empire. They took advantage of the conflicts sparked between the empire and the kingdom of Hungary, and permanently sought to extend their authority.<sup>6</sup> The town of Ras now comes into focus. Its beginnings are not so well-known. It was surmised that a bishopric was erected here by Peter I of Bulgaria in the 10th century, and it was later transferred under the archbishopric of Ohrid. More noteworthy is the fact that the land of the Ras bishopric was one of the largest ever that the Serbs deprived the Byzantine rule of. Ras becomes the seat of power for the great *župan* in the area. Latin sources in the 11th and the 12th centuries associated the Serbs with the town of Ras and thus validated the name of Rascia (*Raška*) for Westerners, and not Serbia, a name which the Byzantines kept. The reigns of Stefan Nemanja (1166–1196) and Stefan Nemanjić (1196–1228) were a turning point in the development of the Serbian state. The authority of the emperor in Constantinople was initially acknowledged, and the ruler of Serbia was integrated in the Byzantine hierarchy as *sebastokrator*. Serbia expanded its territory and its power, and the anti-Byzantine upheaval in Bulgaria and the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204 largely weakened the influence of the empire in the Balkans. This is how the balance of power shifted in the region. Still, where political structures, but mostly the religious and cultural aspects were concerned, the Byzantine influence still had a powerful grasp. In 1217, grand *župan* Stefan Nemanjić is crowned king, and Serbia becomes a local power, rivalling the Bulgarian empire to the east and the kingdom of Hungary to the north.

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<sup>4</sup> Sima Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy: Urban Society in Serbia and Bosnia,” in *Urban Society of Eastern Europe*, pp. 159–160.

<sup>5</sup> Guldescu, *History of Medieval Croatia*, pp. 175–184, 251.

<sup>6</sup> Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 15–24.



This is when urban life is reanimated. Unfortunately, due to the unreliability of sources, we cannot determine any specific facts on towns in the area, especially on those in the western parts of Serbia and in Bosnia. These vastly forested territories had a low population density. Changes become evident in the latter half of the 13th century and in the 14th, when numerous rural settlements, as well as new towns, feature in documents. The population increase was also due to the arrival of settlers: Slavic, Vlachs, Albanian, and even Armenian in origin, the last in this sequence being brought by the Byzantines. An intensive use of agricultural land increased trade with products such as honey, wax, wine, cattle, but also furs and salt.<sup>7</sup>

The development of towns in the inner areas was stimulated by the arrival of so-called “guests” (*gosti*), miners of German origin, called *sasin*, *sasi* or *Teotonicci* in local sources.<sup>8</sup> They are first mentioned in 1254, but all the information kept in the centuries to come would then only refer to Germans settling in Brskovo (present-day Mojkovac, Montenegro), probably the first major mining town in this area. Until the end of the 13th century, seven more mines are opened, and, in the 14th century, mining centres also emerge in Bosnia (after 1339), 30 in all.<sup>9</sup> The largest ones were located at: Novo Brdo, Srebrenica, Rudnik, Trepča, Olovo and Janjevo, with the first two becoming the most important mining operations in the Balkans. Mining developed in these areas as mining operations throughout Europe entered a general crisis. The land had depleted its resources, mines were flooded, and the silver production reached a significant low even at well-known mines, such as those in Freiburg.<sup>10</sup> In the Balkans, Germans introduced efficient mining techniques, as well as a legal system which protected the autonomy of the newly-formed communities. It cannot be claimed that all of these mining centres developed urban forms, but they obviously had a distinct organization and structure compared to surrounding settlements. It is unknown why these settlers came to Serbia and Bosnia. The Mongol attack of 1241 was claimed as a possible reason. It was believed to have led a group of Germans from Hungary to flee

<sup>7</sup> Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 29–40, 53–54.

<sup>8</sup> C. Jireček, *La civilisation serbe au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1920), p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Sima Ćirković, “The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper in the Central Parts of the Balkans from the 13th to the 16th Century,” in *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>10</sup> Desanka Kovačević, “Les mines d’or et d’argent en Serbie et Bosnie,” *Annales Economies—Sociétés—Civilisations*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1960), pp. 248–249.

here, but the invitation to settle in Serbia addressed by King Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276) may have played its part as well.<sup>11</sup> It is widely assumed that Germans came from Hungary, and more specifically, Slovakia<sup>12</sup> or Transylvania.<sup>13</sup> The scenario of settlers being attracted by economic reasons in the Serbian area seems to be the most accurate. Similar situations are displayed by Poland, Hungary, and even the Romanian Principalities.

Unfortunately, privilege charters that indicated the status and the rights of Germans are not kept, but we may infer this from other sources. Since their status differed from that of the local population and they were Catholics, settled like islands in a predominantly Orthodox area, German miners were granted privileges. They enjoyed personal and religious freedom, and held autonomy in organizing the community. They were also granted the right to deforestation when seeking silver or gold ore, which were plentiful here.<sup>14</sup> If such deposits were discovered, they had the right to establish new colonies, paying certain duties to the king, who held official monopoly over income derived from mining operations.<sup>15</sup> German miners were not only adept at mining for silver, but also at lead, copper and iron production. Exports were oriented towards the Adriatic coast, providing incentive for the arrival and settling of foreign merchants around the mines. On the one hand, they transported ore on the coast, on the other, they brought goods, produce, fabric, objects and tools required by miners. It was so that urban-like settlements developed around the mines, which saw economic growth not only on account of operations, but also because trade was thriving here. It is difficult to pinpoint the date when these centres advanced to the urban stage. This probably occurred in the

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<sup>11</sup> Ćirković, Kovačević-Kojić, “L'Économie naturelle,” p. 50; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 54–55; Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> Jireček believes the Saxons to have arrived from Slovak Spiš (Jireček, *La civilisation serbe*, pp. 28–29), while Beldiceanu added as possible sites Banská Štiavnica and Kremnica as well (Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 59–66). The main argument is that there are many similarities between the mining laws in Slovakia and Serbia/Bosnia (see notes 15 and 91 below).

<sup>13</sup> Nikolaj Markov, “Le ‘problème saxon’ dans l’histoire bulgare pendant le Moyen Âge. Une nouvelle hypothèse,” *SF*, vol. LI (1992), pp. 22–23.

<sup>14</sup> Silver was mined in Serbia and Bosnia (in Srebrenica) ever since Roman times (Speros Vryonis Jr., “The Question of the Byzantine Mines,” *Speculum*, vol. 37, no. 1 (1962), pp. 12–15). Silver ore here was all the more precious, since it was 1/6 gold (Kovačević, “Les mines d’or et d’argent,” pp. 253, 255).

<sup>15</sup> Malcolm Burr, “The Code of Stephan Dušan, Tsar and Autocrat of the Serbs and Greeks,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 28 (1949–1950), pp. 520–521.

14th century, although some historians date it in early 15th century. The first part (1349) of the *Žakonik* (the code of law issued by Stefan Dušan) includes several provisions concerning towns, Germans and merchants, indicating that their existence in the kingdom's structure was fully acknowledged. More noteworthy is the fact that the provision regarding Germans is titled *On Saxons* and is immediately continued by *On market towns*, a sign that their settlements had already gone on to become, from mining centres, towns with multiple economic functions in the latter half of the 14th century.<sup>16</sup>

A certain amount of information on the internal organization of these settlements was kept. Upon their arrival in the Balkans, Germans kept their own laws, which were partly recorded in the mining law in force in Serbia and Bosnia. Serbia has provided us with an original *Žakon o rudnicima despota Stefana Lazarevića*, a law discussed by an assembly of 24 miners and codified in 1412 by Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427).<sup>17</sup> In its turn, Bosnia kept the *Žakoni vojvode Kovača za Srebrenicu i rudnik Sase* and *Kraljev zakon* by proxy of future Ottoman regulations.<sup>18</sup> A large number of these laws adapted articles of the mining laws of Banská Štiavnica and Kremnica, in Slovakia. Since they followed the Central-European pattern in their organization, many historians tended to look upon Slovakia as the place of origin for these miners. The mining laws covered provisions regarding: marking the boundaries of mining-related operations, the activities required for draining and venting, common activities, relationships between miners, workers and entrepreneurs, revenues for the king or kept by miners, common expenses and how they were to be divided among company members (called *gvarci*, Germ. *Gewerke*).<sup>19</sup> The institution which ensured the

<sup>16</sup> Ćirković, Kovačević-Kojić, "L'Économie naturelle," p. 51; Burr, "The Code," pp. 519–522 (art. 118–127).

<sup>17</sup> Nicola Radojčić, *Žakon o rudnicima despota Stefana Lazarevića* (Belgrade, 1962), pp. 37–38). Some historians believe that the last 20 articles in Stefan Lazarević's code (Radojčić, *Žakon*, pp. 51–57) were part of the statute for the town of Novo Brdo (Desanka Kovačević, "Le rôle de l'industrie minière dans le développement des centres économiques en Serbie et en Bosnie, pendant la première moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *SB*, vol. 3 (1970), p. 134), while others believe there are not enough arguments to support this (Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 167–168).

<sup>18</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 210–213, doc. 12 and 14.

<sup>19</sup> Jireček, *La civilisation serbe*, p. 29, note 2; pp. 57–60; Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 53–124; Ćirković, "The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper," pp. 44–56; Dubravko Lovrenović, "Medieval Bosnia and Central European Culture: interweaving and Acculturation," *Forum Bosniae*, vol. 15 (2002), pp. 208–212.

functioning of this system was a general assembly of miners (*rudarski sabor*), which presided over causes related to mining: boundary, property and mining issues, arguments between associates etc.<sup>20</sup> This institution headed the settlement along with a council (*curia Teutonicorum*) made up of 12 members called *purgari* (*curia purgarorum*), which had legal and administrative duties. The *purgari* (Germ. *Bürger*) feature in sources with their name translated into Serbian or Italian as *gragjani*, *borghesani* or *cittadini*, being termed by their contemporaries as *officiales*, *maiores civitatis* or *anciani*.<sup>21</sup> As for the community representative, opinions remain divided. Jireček claims that trials were presided over by a judge who bore a sign of power (*baculus iudicis regis*, cane?).<sup>22</sup> Ćirković does not mention this judge and only mentions a leader of the mining settlement, called *comes* (*knez*, *comes civitatis*), chosen by inhabitants or appointed among them. Beldiceanu, based on Ottoman sources, identifies the *comes* as the one heading the miners' assembly (*sabor*), but also the one ruling over an administrative unit.<sup>23</sup> The first *comes* mentioned in documents is a certain Vreibergerius, in 1280. We cannot be sure whether he had the town seal, but such a sign is indicated in sources (*bullā del luogo*). He was not based in any town hall and worked in his own home. He was assisted by a town crier (*putal*, Germ. *Büttell*) and a lesser official (*pristav*).<sup>24</sup> The existence of a *judex*, also present in towns in Hungary and Wallachia is not altogether impossible. It is likely that in the specific environment of Serbia and Bosnia, he had limited office, whereas the role of the *comes* was vaster and covered the entire settlement. The king's representative was an official called *vojvode* or *kefalija*, who attended important trials. Stefan Dušan's code of laws stated that this official had an income, but without indicating its source; he also had the right to acquire products from townspeople at half the price.<sup>25</sup> A number of persons involved in the actual mining operations were: *urbarax*, *hutman*, *chafar* (Germ. *Schaffer*). The terms used in reference to craftsmen and overseers are usually German in origin,

<sup>20</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 117, 138.

<sup>21</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," p. 162.

<sup>22</sup> Jireček, *La civilisation serbe*, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 117–118.

<sup>24</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 162, 168; Zdravko Pljakov, "Le statut de la ville Byzantine balkanique aux XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles," *EB*, no. 3 (1985), p. 89.

<sup>25</sup> Burr, "The Code," p. 210.

whereas unskilled labourers have Slavic names.<sup>26</sup> Other minor officials, *carinci* (“customs officers”) acted as middlemen between the central authority and the local ones. They were usually recruited among those regularly buying the right to collect certain duties and taxes for the king. He held one part of the mined ore, one part of the refined metal, had the right to mint currency, to tax the marketplace, etc. To conclude, whereas it is difficult to distinguish the urban character of mining settlements, this character becomes obvious from the 14th century on, especially in Novo Brdo, Trepča, Rudnik, Srebrenica, Priština or Kreševo.<sup>27</sup>

Mining settlements are not the only ones to have become urbanized in this area of the Balkans. Metal production opened up a true market, which merchants in settlements on the Adriatic coast took advantage of, settlements where trade was predominant. From early 7th century on, and up to the 11th, a dense network of towns emerged here, with many of them being bishop’s sees. These towns were influenced by similar centres in the northern Mediterranean, and especially Venice. Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Kotor, Zadar, Trogir, Bar and Split stand out, centres which were autonomous to a larger degree than mining towns.<sup>28</sup>

Most towns on the north-east coast of the Adriatic passed under formal control of the Hungarian king early 12th century. To counteract the Venetian influence and keep his new subjects in check, King Coloman I allowed these towns to keep their individual status (1107). A major exception must be noted in the lax Hungarian policy towards Dalmatian towns: the Hungarian king wished to keep a tight rein over local bishops (in Split and Zadar).<sup>29</sup> Town inhabitants were free persons, managing internal affairs on their own. They elected their own judges, as well as a *comes*, who the king only acknowledged; they were not held liable to any court of law, except that of the town where they lived; they were exempt of military and tax duty, save for one sixth of the customs taxes in ports. Foreigners were not allowed to settle within town walls, and not even members of the royal retinue were not

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<sup>26</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 104–114; Ćirković, “The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper,” p. 45.

<sup>27</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Ćirković, Kovačević-Kojić, “L’Économie naturelle,” pp. 47–48.

<sup>29</sup> Details in Joan Dusa, *The Medieval Dalmatian Episcopal Cities. Development and Transformation* (New York, 1991), pp. 48–51.

permitted access.<sup>30</sup> It must be noted that these towns did not claim a common, “national” or regional identity. As in Italy, inhabitants were recognized by their town of origin, with some being Ragusan, others, Splitsan or Trogiran, and they were often at odds with each other. The common interests of town inhabitants prevailed over ethnical differences.<sup>31</sup>

After 1205, Ragusa leaves Byzantine rule to come under the influence of Venice, which sends a *comes* as its representative. Ever since the treaty of Zadar was concluded (between Hungary and Venice) and then that of Visegrád (between Hungary and Ragusa)—both in 1358—the small Adriatic republic practically led an internal and external policy of its own. It was very much alike in organization to many of the Italian republics.<sup>32</sup> The town was headed by a Senate (*Consilium Rogatorum*), made up of 30–40 members, chosen among the large patrician families. The Senate would govern alongside two other institutions, the Small Council (*Consilium Minus*, the rector and 10 other members), and the Grand Council (*Consilium Maius*, with around 300 members, all male patricians aged over 20). The Senate put forth laws and dealt with foreign affairs, the Small Council with regulating the market, and also served as a supreme court of law, and the Grand Council analyzed and sanctioned laws (along with the archbishop), choosing the members of the other two institutions.<sup>33</sup> From the 13th century on, a first period of economic development ensues in the town, which encourages and takes advantage, especially after 1280, of the silver mined in Serbia and Bosnia. The Ragusans began forming significant colonies in mining towns, where they brought in capital and entered into extractive companies, and also rented the right to accumulate various royal income and even held local offices.<sup>34</sup> In Srebrenica, in 1431–1432, around 300 Ragusans lived, and, in 1434, even 500 of them.<sup>35</sup> The income was to match. In order to avail themselves of

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<sup>30</sup> The charter granted in 1108 by Coloman I to the inhabitants of Trogir was preserved, and later became a model for other Dalmatian towns controlled by the king of Hungary (Jean W. Sedlar, *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages, 1000–1500* (Seattle and London, 1994), p. 130).

<sup>31</sup> Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans*, pp. 84–86.

<sup>32</sup> Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th Centuries: a City Between East and West* (Norman, 1972), pp. 15–22, 40–42.

<sup>33</sup> Krekić, *Dubrovnik*, pp. 38–39.

<sup>34</sup> Ćirković, “The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper,” pp. 47–51.

<sup>35</sup> Kovačević, “Le rôle de l’industrie minière,” pp. 135–137.

customs duties in Srebrenica and Ponor, the Ragusans paid 425 silver pounds in 1389. This amount would go up to 3100 pounds in 1417, and even up to 30000 ducats per year in 1458.<sup>36</sup> The status of middlemen between the inner Balkan area and Italian area (especially Venice) that the Ragusans held led to the creation of a numerous, wealthy and influential patriciate. Later statistics reveal the existence of 17 patrician households with 70 members in the 16th century Zadar, with 30 households of no less than 300 members in Ragusa. Sources show that those belonging to the *nobiles* or *meliores* traded silver, gold, lead, spices, and cloth, hence expensive products which brought significant income.<sup>37</sup>

Kotor was the most important Adriatic port held by the Serbian king. The town kept its organization previous to coming under Serbian influence, the inhabitants having their own laws and regulations. Town statutes even prevented inhabitants from calling someone to trial in the royal courts or to attend the king's courts of law. Until the latter half of the 14th century, townspeople here played an important part in exporting mining products to Serbia. Their place was gradually assumed by the Ragusans.<sup>38</sup> From 1370 on, Kotor came under the rule of the Hungarian king, with Venice coming into its own as an authority for it after 1420. In all cases, the central authority only imposed a *comes* who would represent its interests.<sup>39</sup>

In the inner area, a series of settlements with an uncertain urban character can be found, with a population that, albeit not very numerous, undertook commercial, but agricultural activities as well. These settlements developed later, in the latter half of the 14th century and former part of the 15th, growing out of suburbs for local fortifications, at crossroads, and owing their existence to a heightened local trade. Their rapid coming under Ottoman rule does not allow us to identify the scope of urbanization in their case. Archaeological and topographical research shows, however, that some of them can be considered towns in the moment they changed their status mid 15th century. Their name (*podgradije*), especially in Bosnia, where the

<sup>36</sup> Kovacevic, "Les mines d'or et d'argent," p. 251.

<sup>37</sup> Bariša Krekić, "Developed Autonomy: the Patricians in Dubrovnik and Dalmatian Cities," in *Urban Society of Eastern Europe*, pp. 188–190.

<sup>38</sup> Krekić, *Dubrovnik*, p. 21; Ćirković, "The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper," pp. 47–49.

<sup>39</sup> Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 71, 92.

number of castles was large, shows that they emerged near a fortified location (the “pod” prefix means “under”): Podvisoski, near the royal castle at Visoko, which became one of the seats for the Bosnian state, Podborač, near Borač, as well as Podprozor, Podzvonik etc. It was in Bosnia as well that other temporary royal seats are added: Kreševo, Jajce or Vranduk. Whereas this type of settlements emerges in an earlier stage in the central and southern parts of Serbia and Bosnia, after the first quarter of the 15th century, new centres appear in the northern and north-eastern area, an effect of the Ottomans gradually conquering the southern regions. Bohorina, Zajača, Krupanj, Belo Brdo, Valjevo, Zaslou (Šabac), Paraćin or Užice can be noticed now, some even being involved in mining activities. Belgrade briefly belonged to the Serbian state (1276/1282–1319, 1402–1427), being a possession of the kingdom of Hungary. It was only after 1427, when it is founded and fortified, that Smederevo becomes an administrative, economic, and political centre of the Serbian despotate.<sup>40</sup>

Settlements of the above type spanned two distinct areas. The first one was the fortification, taking up a strategic position at a certain height. Inside, the king or his representative and the noblemen resided, and it was also here that a church was erected, acting as a chapel. Outside, the suburbs, with merchant and craftsmen houses, centring on a marketplace. The main church was located here near the market, along with the customs, inns and booths. Since a large part of Bosnia, as well as central and southern Serbia is mountainous, houses were distributed along terraces, their density decreasing toward the outer areas of the town. Towns in Bosnia also hosted Franciscan monasteries, usually erected near the outskirts. Most of these settlements also held the right to organize a large annual fair. The fact that the commercial function was predominant in these towns is also evident in the *trg* name which they were assigned in documents.<sup>41</sup> The major Adriatic ports had their own territory, with several villages, whereas inner towns are only known to have had land allotted to them (*gradska zemlja što je oko grada*), as the above-mentioned code of laws by Stefan Dušan indicates.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Kovačević, “Le rôle de l’industrie minière,” p. 138; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, p. 99.

<sup>41</sup> Mehmed Bublin, *Gradovi Bosne i Hercegovine. Milenijum razvoja i godine urbičida/ The Cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Millennium of Development and the Years of Urbicide* (Sarajevo, 1999), pp. 31–39.

<sup>42</sup> Burr, “The Code,” p. 522.



Many of these small towns only became important under Ottoman rule. Ottoman registries (*defter*) recorded them, assigning them a new name (*bazaar*) and setting them apart from rural settlements by their population number rather than by their trade. Small towns had an average of 100 families, as opposed to villages with around 20 families; the sultan's income was here ten times larger than that derived from a common village. Since these centres began developing later, just before the Ottoman domination began, not too many sources on how they were organized remain. In two cases, in Podzvonik and Goražde, the office of the *purgari* is mentioned, whereas the *comes* is present in several such centres. It is likely that a transfer of organization occurred from the German mining centres to this area. The acceptance of locals in the mining system, required in this kind of operations, led to a gradual expansion in the organization and representation method that had initially been exclusive to Germans, and it also became known in settlements which had nothing in common with mining.<sup>43</sup>

On Macedonian territory, which came briefly under the domination of the Serbian kingdom in the 14th century, towns developed following a Byzantine pattern survived, different from the urban centres mentioned above. Unlike Central and Western Europe, where a privileged community developed in towns, state centralization did not allow for this in the Byzantium. When the first changes to this system appeared, it was already too late. Byzantine centres coming under Serbian control were fortified settlements. Some held a citadel, a seat for the garrison, led by a representative for the king (*kefalija*). Towns in this category do not display an economic specialization that can be compared to that encountered in mining towns or in centres relying on trade. Also, no institutions indicating any level of local autonomy can be identified, except at church level.<sup>44</sup> The only person that can be linked to the communities in the rest of Serbia is the *knez*, introduced here by the new Serbian rulers. Urban settlements, such as Skopje and Prilep, kept their urban character, most of the population being

<sup>43</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 171–172.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Charanis, "Town and Country in the Byzantine Possessions of the Balkan Peninsula During the Later Period of the Empire," in *Aspects of the Balkans. Continuity and Change*, eds. Henrik Birnbaum, Speros Vryonis Jr (Haga-Paris, 1972), pp. 135–136; Pljakov, "Le statut de la ville," pp. 82–86; Gh. I. Brătianu, *Privilèges et franchises municipales dans l'Empire Byzantin* (Paris and Bucharest, 1936), p. 111.

Greek.<sup>45</sup> Stefan Dušan's *Žakonik* acknowledged in art. 124 (*On town laws*) all the rights they held at the time when they came under Serbian rule.<sup>46</sup> In the second part of the code of laws, in 1354, the code goes so far as to suggest that the king himself had issued some charters that acknowledged the rights of towns, without naming any. It is assumed that reference is made to former Byzantine centres, without ruling out the granting by the king of such laws in other towns as well.<sup>47</sup> In towns like Skoplje, not the entire population had the same status, since there were different categories, both free persons and people relying on monasteries (*paroikoi*).<sup>48</sup>

The economic development of the towns in the 14th century was hindered by the political crisis which left an ever-present mark in this area from the end of this century on. Ever since 1371, Ragusan merchants complained that they "cannot make a living without trade, and we largely trade in the kingdom of Rascia; the situation in Rascia, due to discord between barons, no longer allows us to trade as we used to." Wars in the area, Ottoman forays, the dangers of passage led to an increase in prices, with sometimes paradoxical effects. The price of silver rose from six to eight ducats a pound (around 330 grams), leading to an increase in production. An ever-increasing number of merchants were now interested in buying or opening up new silver mines, especially in northern Serbia, along the Drina bank (Želesnik, Rudište etc). Invitations for some Italian towns sent in the 15th century have been preserved (to Siena, Naples, Ferrara and Urbino), which requested that the towns send some skilled miners (*magistri experti*) to Serbia. New settlements emerge, involved in mining, as well as in trade, some of them autonomous. Stefan Lazarević, Serbia's despot, was also among the ones seeking to intensify mining operations, since he needed the resources to back up his fight with the Ottomans. A Burgund knight passing through Serbia in 1433, noted that despot George (Djuradj) Branković (1427–1456) gained an annual income of 200.000 ducats from the mines in Novo Brdo.<sup>49</sup> The Ottomans, having established a strong foothold at the borders of the Serbian state, at

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<sup>45</sup> The most important families had Greek names: Lipsiotes, Skopiotes, Apokaukos, Skropolites etc. (Jireček, *La civilization serbe*, p. 27).

<sup>46</sup> Burr, "The Code," p. 521.

<sup>47</sup> Burr, "The Code," p. 524.

<sup>48</sup> Pljakov, "Le statut de la ville," pp. 81–82; Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 173–174.

<sup>49</sup> Ćirković, "The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper," p. 52.

whose expense they gained ground, were interested in continued mining, since silver gathered in the sultan's treasury. In all this period, the Ragusans kept their dominant position in silver export, at the expense of Kotor. Between December 1426 and November 1432, over 10.000 silver pounds were brought by the Ragusans from the Serbian mines. The Vlachs south of the Danube take part along with the Ragusans in the transport of metals, and especially lead. The former had a well-established reputation as carriers. Based on mutual treaties that were periodically renewed, the merchants in Serbia obtained the right to free trade in Ragusa. A new contender emerges on the ore market: Venice, who had preferred the silver that the Ragusans delivered up to then. Since Venetian possessions in the Levant were under Ottoman menace, merchants in the lagoon sought direct action in Serbia and Bosnia. Tvrtko Kotromanić II, King of Bosnia (1404–1409, 1421–1443), granted the Venetians a privilege in 1422, allowing them to trade silver and gold without the middlemen. Even so, the number of Italian merchants travelling to the mines was smaller, they preferring to purchase ore in the Dalmatian towns. From Venice, silver and the other metals were distributed into the entire Europe.<sup>50</sup>

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The diversity of urban types encountered in Serbia, Bosnia or Dalmatia, may be explained by the political evolution of the region. Serbian rulers attempted to unify the western part of the Balkans under a sole dominion in the 13th and the 14th centuries. They did not succeed and they did not even try to consolidate the already existing system of towns, which had evolved differently, under the sway of various influences on urban centres. The Serbian kings could only acknowledge the existing status quo in order not to compromise the fragile stability in the state. Special issues could emerge when legal or commercial points of contention existed between people belonging to groups different in status. As trade heightened, such situations multiplied and a middle ground was sought. In the border areas, ever since the reign of Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321), a practice derived from common law

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<sup>50</sup> Kovačević, "Les mines d'or et d'argent," pp. 250, 253–258; Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 165–167; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 93–96.

was used. If a certain case involved royal subjects and tradesmen from Ragusa, a court of law made up of an equal number of members on each side was created (*stanak*). The system was applied especially in the coastal area. Mixed courts of law also appeared following differences between German and Ragusan miners.<sup>51</sup>

Seeking to fulfil their commercial goals, some Ragusans went even further and took up residence in the towns they traded with. Where mining settlements were concerned, they became members of the mining companies and consequently enjoyed the protection granted by the autonomy of that settlement, but also that given by their status as a citizen of Ragusa, under whose jurisdiction they usually remained. This situation led to abuses, that the Serbian kings and despots sought to settle. Despot George Branković decided in 1433 that all Ragusans in Srebrenica should be entered into official record, to avoid potential legal problems. Initially, a Ragusan consul would visit the colonies periodically, settling disputes where only Ragusans were involved. After 1396, the issues were brought to the attention of a consul and two judges, appointed by Ragusa for each separate case. The large number of groups in towns invoking separate legal systems bore greatly on the status of those settlements. On the one hand, autonomy was reinforced, since changing the status of a social group was difficult, especially when it came to foreigners relying on commercial treaties or privileges. On the other, the vast number of situations had negative effects on the development of towns, since it prevented a solid community of inhabitants from forming, a *universitas*, as was the case with Western and Central-European countries.<sup>52</sup>

The reduced autonomy of mining or commercial Serbian towns is made evident by the lack of public buildings. Archaeological excavations revealed only two types of building in these settlements: fortifications and churches. The former were erected by the sovereign, whereas churches were proof of the religiousness of the wealthy flock in town. The existence of ethnical and religious communities resulted in a lack of solidarity within the community, since Orthodox and Catholic Christians rallied around their own churches. The Catholic one was the focus for German miners and traders from Italy and coastal

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<sup>51</sup> See art. 153 in the Code of Stefan Dušan (Burr, "The Code," p. 527); Ćirković, *The Serbs*, p. 72.

<sup>52</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 163–164.

towns (especially the Ragusans), since these places of worship were a true symbol of autonomy. Bosnia is a special case, since the monarchs here preferred Catholicism, even though the Church of Bosnia, with significant bogomilist influences, functioned here. The Franciscan were a permanent presence in Bosnia, where they played their part in the urbanization process, albeit indirectly. The Franciscan order entertained profound links to towns, since most of its churches and monasteries were erected in mining centres and in those undertaking trade.<sup>53</sup> The wealth brought by mining ore also attracted the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church. Novo Brdo became a bishop's see in the 15th century.

Urban society was very loose in its structure. There was a patriciate, and a constant supply of well-to-do folk coming from Ragusa with financial resources. The members of this patriciate held the main offices in towns. They were complemented by elements very diverse in origin: specialized miners, some naturalized for several generations, others recently arrived from abroad, a vast local workforce and merchants or craftsmen, all wishing to make the best of the economic situation. Men of means were part of the community and also received Ragusan citizenship.<sup>54</sup> The merchants (*kupci*) have seven separate articles in Stefan Dušan's law. Art. 118 stated that "no one was to set upon with force merchants travelling in lands belonging to the emperor, to steal by force or to scatter their merchandise or take their money by force." The punishment was large, at a cost of 500 perpers. Art. 122 prevented noblemen and customs officers to take into custody any merchant; if they did so, they would have to pay a 300 perpers fine. Other articles provided for road safety and the possibility of receiving bed and protection in inns. By these measures, the king created incentives for internal trade and also covered the requests of foreign merchants, especially the Ragusans, who wished more safety for them and their merchandise.<sup>55</sup> In towns that were a long time under Byzantine rule (Skopje or Prilep), the clergy and the noblemen were an important category, which owned houses, stores and plots of land in towns.<sup>56</sup> As for the Germans settled in Serbia or Bosnia, they were eventually

<sup>53</sup> Lovrenović, "Medieval Bosnia," pp. 214–217.

<sup>54</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," pp. 169–170.

<sup>55</sup> Articles 118–119, 121–122, 153, 159–160 (Burr, "The Code," pp. 519–520, 527, 530–531).

<sup>56</sup> Charanis, "Town and Country," p. 136.

assimilated in the bulk of the local population. Having little experience in mining, but great need for the silver in the Serbian mountains, the Ottoman did not change the mining legislation, nor the system of organization for mining settlements. Proof to this is the fact that the name of *sas* remained in use a long time after the conquest, eventually indicating either a member of the mining community, or a person/group enjoying a certain degree of autonomy.<sup>57</sup>

The diversity and the complexity of the urbanization in this area is reflected in the terminology, which, where towns are concerned, focuses on topography, and not the type of community living there. Terms such as *opština* or *opkina*, “community”, are not used for settlements in the inner area. Whereas inhabitants of mining settlements are termed *sasi*, those in centres with predominantly commercial functions are called *trgovci*, meaning “merchants”. The main term used in written sources is the Old Slavonic *grad*, indicating mainly a fortification, and only secondarily a town (in documents, *grad* is used for large towns). The second term, intensely used, is that of *trg* (*trej* in Serbian, *forum*, *mercatum* in Latin). It initially indicated a market, and later came to name only one part of the settlement and, finally, a certain type of settlement, where commercial activities were predominant. From the 15th century on, the term *varoš*, Hungarian in origin, comes into the mainstream. It is a synonym of the Slavonic *podgradije* or the Latin *suburbium* and initially indicated a settlement near a fortification. Italian sources name towns in this area *civitas*, *zitade*, *mercato* or *borgo*, the last term being usually assigned to unfortified settlements.<sup>58</sup> As for towns that followed a Byzantine line, the sources referring to them keep Greek terminology, coupled with the Slavonic one: the citadel is *akropolis*—*kula*, the king’s representative, *kefalija*—*vojvoda*, and the civilian settlement, *amborij* (from the Greek *emporion*)—*podgradije*.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Nicoară Beldiceanu, “Actes de Süleyman le Législateur concernant les mines de Srebrnica et Sase,” *SF*, vol. XXVI (1967), p. 2; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> Jireček, *La civilisation serbe*, pp. 27–28; Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 165; see also Traian Stoianovich, “Model and Mirror of the Premodern Balkan City,” *SB*, vol. 3 (1970), pp. 100–102.

<sup>59</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 173.

*Towns in Bulgaria*

Bulgaria was in a different situation. The massive migration of Slavic tribes south of the Danube in the 7th century led to a destruction of urban life, as it had survived in Roman form. In the first Bulgarian empire, some ancient Roman towns were repopulated, fortified and served as seats of monarchs: Pliska (until Simeon I) and Preslav (starting with Simeon I and under the reign of his offspring). Near fortresses-royal seats, preurban settlements developed, where merchants and craftsmen set themselves up to provide the palace with products. Although spanning a vast surface (Preslav had over 3,5 km<sup>2</sup>), these settlements never attained a level of development high enough to rival Byzantine towns. They had a mainly military and administrative role.<sup>60</sup> The *Primary Chronicle of Kiev* or *Tale of Bygone Years* (*Povest vremennykh let*) mentions 80 *gorods* in the Lower Danube area (an unrealistic figure, most likely), trading posts or mere fortifications, which were supposedly conquered by Sviatoslav I of Kiev, when battling the Bulgars.<sup>61</sup> A major centre stood near Pereyaslavets, a trading post for products arriving via the Black Sea from Russia or the East, exchanged with products arriving via the Danube from Central Europe.<sup>62</sup> Although economically and demographically affected, Greek towns on the Black Sea coast survived the arrival of the Bulgars, who held them under temporary rule.<sup>63</sup> After 1018, the Byzantine Empire regained control over these regions. The Byzantines reshaped the land they conquered, creating *Thema Paristrion*, which included the area between the Balkan Mountains, the Danube, upstream of Vidin and up to its deltas, and the Black Sea. In sources kept from the 11th century, this administrative-territorial unit also features as an *arhontate* of the towns on Istros, indicating that urban life, now in Byzantine forms, continued to exist.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Peter Tashev, "Urbanization in Bulgaria," in E. A. Gutkind, *International History of City Development*, vol. VIII, pp. 29–33; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, pp. 95–98.

<sup>61</sup> *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. VII, ed. G. Popa-Lisseanu (Bucharest, 1935), pp. 71–72.

<sup>62</sup> Elisaveta Todorova, "River Trade in the Balkans During the Middle Ages," *EB*, no. 4 (1984), p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> N. Bănescu, *Les duchés byzantines de Paristrion (Paradunavon) et de Bulgarie* (Bucharest, 1946), pp. 45–117.

The most important towns in this period are Philippopol, Dorostolon and Serdica.<sup>65</sup>

The sparking of the Asen and Peter brothers' revolt, in 1185, led to the creation of the second Bulgarian empire, internationally acknowledged following treaties with Pope Innocent III (1204). The new political context saw many urban settlements grow along the banks of the Danube: Vidin, Lom, Nikopol, Svishtov, Novgrad or Ruse. Others dotted the Black Sea coast: Sozopol, Varna, Mesembria and Anchialos (the last two only temporary under Bulgarian rule).<sup>66</sup> Some of the towns continued Byzantine centres from between 1018 and 1185, indicating that the transfer from Byzantine organization to that of the new Bulgarian state did not have a negative bearing on urban life, it actually enhanced it. This was the situation of Plovdiv, former Philippopol, Sofia-Serdica, Nesebăr-Mesembria, and Silistra-Dorostolon. New towns, developed near Roman ruins and then as suburbs near medieval fortifications, were those in Cerven and Lovech etc.<sup>67</sup>

Between the 13th and the 14th centuries, the most significant urban centre in this area was at Târnovo (*Târnograd*), where the main seat of the emperor was also established. The town extended over two hills: Tsarevets and Trapezitsa, completed by neighbourhoods in the outer area. The royal palace and the clergy array were located on Tsarevets, and they were well backed by two rows of fortifications. The remains of no less than 380 buildings were found around them: houses, workshops, stores, including 21 churches, four monasteries and cemeteries. On the Trapezitsa hill, archaeological research unveiled 17 churches, one monastery, and several houses inhabited by the aristocracy, for the 12th–14th centuries period. This hill was also fortified and, along with Tsarevets, formed the “inner city”. Another area, initially called Novi Grad (*Assenova Mahala*) was formed further down the hill, between Tsarevets and Trapezitsa, where relics of the Great Lavra monastery, with the 40 Martyrs Church,<sup>68</sup> as well as other places of worship, civilian buildings, and even metal workshops; one part of the population was made up of craftsmen. A unique area of the town

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<sup>65</sup> See P. Tivčev, “Sur les cités byzantines aux XI<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, vol. I (1962), pp. 153–154.

<sup>66</sup> Todorova, “River Trade,” p. 44.

<sup>67</sup> Tashev, “Urbanization,” pp. 34–36.

<sup>68</sup> Atanas Popov, “Le monastère “La Grande Lavra” de la capitale médiévale de Târnovo,” *BHR*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1979), pp. 70–78.



was that which came to be named Frenk Hisar, situated along the windings of the Iantra river, south-east of Tsarevets. This was where foreign merchants (probably Catholic) had taken up residence. Sources show that, along with Bulgarians, Târnovo also had Jewish, Armenian, and Italian inhabitants. Novi Grad and Frenk Hisar formed “the outer town”, with only insubstantial fortifications. On the western slope of the Momina Krepost hillock, an area adjacent to the city was found, called Devingrad. Half-buried houses were found, along with a small church and cemetery, as well as a series of tools, indicating that this part of the settlement was inhabited by craftsmen and farmers, possibly serfs.<sup>69</sup> The town possibly had, in all, between 12.000 and 15.000 inhabitants.<sup>70</sup> Târnovo displays the existence of several settlements with different structures and functions, political-military, religious and economic, inhabited by people with a different status. The next stage to which Târnovo would have evolved would have been that of uniting this conglomerate, with the economic function gaining importance. Another stage would have probably been an exact regulation of the legal status for the inhabitants. This stage was never reached because of the premature Ottoman conquest (1393).

The arrival of the Ottomans led to the loss of many resources indicating how towns were organized in medieval Bulgaria. No privilege granted to any town community within the country bounds was kept. It is assumed that the Bulgarian leader, as well as the emperor in Constantinople, exerted his authority in towns via some representatives, with reasonably large powers.<sup>71</sup> Information regarding the economic activity of the Bulgarian empire was kept in the foreign archives. The geographical location of Bulgaria, which stood as a middle ground between Central Europe and the Byzantium, favoured the growth of trade, Italian towns seeking the protection and the support of Bulgarian emperors to safeguard privileged positions here.

Access to the Danube and the Black Sea facilitated the development of the port-towns of Varna, Sozopol, Mesembria or Anchialos, which were noted on Italian portolans. These ports held close commercial relations with Venice and Genoa, which were interested in

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<sup>69</sup> Atanas Popov, “La ville médiévale bulgare d’après les recherches archéologiques,” *BHR*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1984), pp. 66–69.

<sup>70</sup> Sedlar, *East Central Europe*, p. 113.

<sup>71</sup> Tudor Teoteoi, “Civilizația statului Asăneștilor între Roma și Bizanț,” in *Răscoala și statul Asăneștilor*, ed. Eugen Stănescu (Bucharest, 1989), p. 81.

obtaining cheap produce from Bulgaria. This will spark a fierce rivalry between the two. Venice entered the area especially after the fourth crusade and after Constantinople fell to the “Latins” (1204). Genoa took the Black Sea market by storm after the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, with which a major commercial treaty was signed, at Nymphaion, in 1261, allowing it free trade beyond the Bosphorus. The Venetians attempted to counteract the position of the Genovese by entering a privileged relation with Bulgaria (*Žagora*). The main ports that they traded with were Varna and Mesembria, in which they established major colonies. In 1346 or 1347, emperor Ivan Alexander (1341–1371) granted a privilege whereby the assets of Venetian traders in Bulgaria were guaranteed, and customs duties for products bought from or brought to Bulgaria were set at 3%. This document stated the cases in which Venetians were affected (seizure of goods, shipwrecks etc.), the right to ransom or assistance, as well as their right to erect churches in Bulgaria. A Venetian consulate was created in Varna (the only one in the area), eliminating the Venetian bailiff in Constantinople as a middleman.<sup>72</sup>

The two Italian republics had different commercial policies. Whereas the Venetians used existing trade centres to their advantage when setting themselves up in an area, the Genovese erected and developed new ones. To this end, the latter availed themselves of the Bulgarian ports at the Black Sea, to which they added the colonies they created to the north, in Vicina, Licostomo and Kilia, each overseen by a consul.<sup>73</sup> The relations between the Genovese and the Bulgarian deteriorated due to emperor Theodor Svetoslav (1300–1321) refusing to compensate damages caused to Genovese merchants in Bulgaria. In 1316, Genoa forbade its merchants to conduct business with Bulgaria.<sup>74</sup> In the latter half of the 14th century, a trade war broke out between the Genovese and Dobrotitsa, a local prince in north-eastern Bulgaria (which was to become Dobruja), under claim that the prince

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<sup>72</sup> Rossica Panova, “The Black Sea Coastal Cities in the Economic and Political Interrelations Among Medieval Bulgaria, Venice and Genoa,” *BHR*, vol. 27, no. 1–2 (1999), pp. 54–55; Vasil Gjuzelev, “Les relations bulgareo-venetiennes durant la première moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *EH*, vol. IX (1979), pp. 39–67.

<sup>73</sup> N. Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chilieii și Cetății Albe* (Bucharest, 1899), pp. 52–53; G. Pitarino, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360–1361)* (Genova, 1971), p. 65, doc. 40.

<sup>74</sup> Vasil Gjuzelev, “Du commerce génois dans les terres bulgares durant le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *BHR*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1979), pp. 36–50.

favoured piracy.<sup>75</sup> Ivanko (1375–1395), Dobrotitsa's heir, concluded a treaty with the Genoese *podesta* in Pera in 1387, whereby the Genoese had the properties owned on Ivanko's land protected by guarantees.<sup>76</sup> Taxes for Genoese merchandise were set at 1%, and products such as gold, silver or pearls were tax-exempt. It was decided that a Genoese consulate should be set up on Ivanko's territories, with authority over all the Genoese activating there. The consul received a plot of land, could have his own headquarters, a church, but also full autonomy.<sup>77</sup> It is hard to tell the extent to which Italian settlers influenced the organization of towns in Bulgaria. Even though they brought in a Western-type way of organization and structures, we cannot be sure whether the privileges they had gained were also extended over the local population in those specific towns. However, we cannot rule out this possibility altogether. In the Byzantine Empire, towns that had obtained privileges after the fourth crusade kept them since the new emperors, the Palaeologus, were willing to compromise in order to keep their authority.<sup>78</sup>

The Ragusans also traded in the Bulgarian regions ever since 1000. Specific information on the activity of tradesmen from Ragusa were only kept from the 12th century on. Having recently come under Norman rule in Sicily (1172), the Ragusans sought Byzantine protection. In 1192, they signed a political and economic treaty with emperor Isaac II Angelos, who acknowledged their right to free trade within the empire and in Bulgaria.<sup>79</sup> After Bulgaria completely severed its ties with the empire, Ragusa entered a direct negotiation with the new rulers. A treaty is concluded in 1253 with Michael I Asen (1246–1256), in

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<sup>75</sup> Michel Balard, *Gènes et l'outre mer*, tom II (Paris and New York, 1980), p. 163, doc. 100. For the history of Dobruja under Dobrotitsa and Ivanko, see *Din istoria Dobrogei*, vol. III, *Bizantini, romani și bulgari la Dunărea de Jos*, eds. Ion Barnea, Ștefan Ștefănescu (Bucharest, 1971), pp. 346–361.

<sup>76</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 54; Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>-début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. I (Roma, 1978), p. 145.

<sup>77</sup> Panova, "The Black Sea," pp. 55–57.

<sup>78</sup> Teoteoi, "Civilizația statului Asăneștilor," pp. 81–82.

<sup>79</sup> In 1192, the Bulgarian state was officially separated from the empire. In 1187, brothers Asen and Peter had concluded a treaty with the Byzantium (whose provisions are not exactly known) and gained de facto acknowledgement of their state, which would be officially acknowledged only in 1204 (Genoveva Cankova-Petkova, Borislav Primov, "Dubrovnik, Byzantium and Bulgaria at the End of the 12th Century," *EH*, vol. III (1966), pp. 79–92).

continuation of a previous agreement, dated 1230.<sup>80</sup> Italian and Ragusan merchants came to Bulgaria to buy produce: wax, honey or grains. Between 1340 and 1341, no less than 5300 kg of wax were exported to Genoa; honey was much sought after, being of superior quality. In exchange, cloth, weapons and fine ceramic were brought.<sup>81</sup>

The towns of Bulgaria also had Jewish settlers, one of the most substantial communities being in Târnovo. Sarah-Theodora, Ivan Alexander's second wife, was Jewish in origin. In 1352, for uncertain reasons, a series of persecutions against the Jews are conducted in the empire.<sup>82</sup> An act issued by members of a Romaniote community, joined by a group of Ashkenazi, is kept from 1376. Other Jews were in Nikopol, Yambol and Sozopol.<sup>83</sup>

In the 14th century, merchants coming from north of the Danube appear in Bulgarian towns. After having been granted a commercial privilege by Vladislav I, prince of Wallachia, in 1368, the townspeople of Braşov (Transylvania) also negotiate for one from Bulgaria as well. Between 1369 (or 1371) and 1396, during Ivan Stratsimir's reign, a similar act was issued, granting the right to free trade in the Vidin area.<sup>84</sup>

A controversial issue is that of the time when Bulgaria had German settlers take up residence in the area, as well as that of the part they played. Ancient historiography sees these colonists as having settled in Bulgaria in the 13th century, coming from Transylvania.<sup>85</sup> By studying the relatively tense political relations between Hungary and the Bulgarian empire of the time, Nikolaj Markov discarded this hypothesis. The arrival of German miners in this area and their settling in the Serbian kingdom were directly linked. Serbia was also their point of departure

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<sup>80</sup> Emil Aleksandrov, "The International Treaties of Medieval Bulgaria (Legal Aspects)," *BHR*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1989), pp. 49–50. The Ragusans continued to trade intensely in the Bulgarian area after the Ottoman conquest as well (Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, "Sur les débuts de colonies ragusaines dans les territoires bulgares (fin du XV<sup>e</sup> s.)," *SB*, vol. 3 (1970), pp. 125–131; Ioanna D. Spisarevska, "Sur le problème de la place et du rôle réservés aux Bulgares dans le commerce ragusain (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> s.)," *EH*, vol. VIII (1978), pp. 141–155).

<sup>81</sup> Panova, "The Black Sea," p. 57.

<sup>82</sup> Nikolaj Kočev, "The Question of Jews and the so-called Judaizers in the Balkans from the 9th to the 14th century," *BHR*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1978), p. 66.

<sup>83</sup> Steven B. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium. 1204–1453* (Tuscaloosa, 1985), p. 66; p. 289, doc. 96; John V. A. Fine Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, 1990), pp. 449–450.

<sup>84</sup> Aleksandrov, "The International Treaties," pp. 51–52.

<sup>85</sup> Markov, "Le problème saxon," pp. 21–22.

when migrating to the mountains in west Bulgaria, when this area came under the authority of the Serbian kings. The Bulgarian town of Kratovo (in today's Macedonia) was also merged into the Serbian kingdom in 1282. After that, a colony of German miners probably started residing there.<sup>86</sup> An important role was held by settlers located around Samokov and in Čiprovci who are, as the above-mentioned historian states, part of a "secondary migration" in the latter half of the 15th century and the former half of the 16th. It was so that the foundation for Catholic centres in west Bulgaria was laid, these centres forming a bishopric in the 17th century, with its see in Čiprovci. When this trend was set into motion, the settlers, probably brought in from mines in Serbia and Bosnia, were engaged in the Slavification process, keeping only their religion and customs. This explains why Ottoman sources, that the author relies on to put forth his theory, do not record them as "Germans", but rather as "Serbians", indicating their place of origin.<sup>87</sup> Other historians include Čiprovci among mining centres in the Serbian despotate where mining laws were enforced, as codified by Stefan Lazarević in 1412, or believe that German miners had crossed the boundaries of the Serbian or Bosnian state to carry out their activity in Macedonian and Bulgarian territories.<sup>88</sup> In 1488, an Ottoman report mentions a mine in the Vidin sandjak. The one submitting the report was the *qadi* in Bergovica, a settlement not far from Čiprovci (at around 30 km). It's also possible that the mines at Čiprovci were among the ones entering the sultan's possession. The report also mentions the owner of a well, the *urbarar*, as well as the personnel in the mines, who were called and were requested to provide information regarding the laws and the customs in "older times". Based on this data, we may assume that mining was a practice here even before the Ottoman arrived.<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, the state of pre-Ottoman sources is precarious at best. No details of any kind were kept regarding the internal organization of German communities before the 16th century. If these colonists arrived before the Ottoman conquest, it is likely that they were organized to a certain extent like the miners in Serbia and Bosnia.

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<sup>86</sup> Markov, "Le problème saxon," pp. 23–24.

<sup>87</sup> Markov, "Le problème saxon," pp. 25–28.

<sup>88</sup> Pljakov, "Le statut de la ville," p. 89; Ćirković, "The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper," p. 43.

<sup>89</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 217–218.

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Urban life in the area south of the Danube took an altogether different turn once the Ottoman swept in. Only Ragusa and the Adriatic towns were able to push them back. The Ottoman Empire united the conquered towns in a different system, with a new set of rules and organization. Many centres lived on, and, in Serbia, some administrative units created by the conquerors were even named after them. Although affected by conflicts occurring in the 15th century, mining towns and Catholic communities there survived and underwent only minor changes. Ottoman authorities accepted their forms of internal organization, and the assemblies, the *knez* and the mining law (*kanun-i-Sas*) are mentioned in the sources.<sup>90</sup> This situation had mainly economic reasons. All the mines were included as sultan's income (*hass*), who forbade the export of gold and silver, directing all the resources towards his mints.<sup>91</sup> The Ottomans provided incentive for the development of the other towns, assigning them different, specifically Eastern features. The local population was complemented by groups of soldiers, craftsmen and merchants brought or arriving on their own from other areas of the empire and the towns gradually became Muslim. Urban life would gain a new momentum, along different lines, in the 16th century.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Fehim Spaho, "Turski rudarski zakoni," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini*, vol. XXV (1913), pp. 133–194; Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, I, pp. 68–77 și II, pp. 177–277.

<sup>91</sup> Ćirković, "The Production of Gold, Silver, and Copper," pp. 54–56; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, pp. 111–114, 123–125.

<sup>92</sup> There were several towns that, after surrendering, managed to have the Ottomans promise not to encroach on their autonomy. Ioannina is one such example (Traian Stoianovich, "Model and Mirror," p. 87).



PART TWO

TOWNS IN WALLACHIA





## CHAPTER ONE

### URBANIZATION

#### *Background*

We cannot study the medieval town in Wallachia without having first examined the political, economic, and religious climate before this state came into existence. To provide insight into the far-reaching process that led local structures south of the Carpathians to their consolidated form, we have to rely on the few external sources and archaeological data available.

Wallachia and Moldavia are among the last medieval states to have claimed a place on the European map. This may be explained by the specific features that eastern areas of the continent displayed after 1000. The development of political structures here was delayed by international factors bearing upon this territory. This land was first and foremost the area where the Byzantine, Romanian and the Slav civilizations met. In 1018, the northern boundary of the Byzantine Empire reached the Danube. The long-term Byzantine influence was felt in Romanian culture, which adopted the main political, legal and religious patterns from it. Relations with the Slavs were ambivalent. The Romanians succeeded in maintaining a Latin identity, as an island surrounded by a predominantly Slavic population, until the arrival of the Hungarians broke every direct contact between the South Slavs and the West Slavs. The Slavs left a distinct mark on the Romanian language, both in its vocabulary and its designations, ranging from names of institutions and persons to those of rivers and settlements. The creation of Romanian states was also delayed by the presence of the last migratory peoples that arrived in Europe, the Turkic people. The Pechenegs (Grec. *patzinakoi*, Lat. *bisseni*, *bessi*) and the Cumans (Turkic *kipchak*, Rus. *polovtsy*) gain control over parts of the land inhabited by the Romanians, maintaining a state of instability.

In its relations with the neighbours, a decisive factor for the Romanian culture was the Orthodox belief. Since Hungarians converted to Western Christianity around the year 1000, the act of separating the

Church of Rome and that of Constantinople (1054) led to the perception of Romanians as “schismatic”. No matter what the political drive was, any action taken against them also had a religious value. The notion of crusade, as introduced by the pope at the end of the 11th century, involving the fight to free the Holy Land, had deteriorated after Constantinople was conquered (1204). What the knights of the 4th crusade undertook in fact set the course for the crusade, that of not only fighting the Muslims, but also the “schismatics.”<sup>1</sup> This was why the 13th century saw the Western world focus its conquering momentum on Eastern Europe. The main force to act here was the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

Until 1204, the Hungarian kings were primarily interested in consolidating their power inside the Carpathian arch. After reaching the Carpathians and the Danube (in Banat), they sought to expand their authority south of the mountains. But, while serving the crusade in good faith, the Hungarian king did not neglect his own goals of conquest. The expansion policy led by the Hungarian crown and the Catholic Church in what was to become Wallachia is put into motion when the Teutonic knights set themselves up in Burzenland (Rom. *Țara Bârsei*). They were part monks, part soldiers, joined in an order created in the latter half of the 12th century. Under the reign of Grand Master Hermann von Salza (1210–1239), this order spread throughout Europe. In 1211, following some little documented negotiations, the knights receive a donation from King Andrew II of Hungary in *quandam terram, Burza nomine, ultra silvas, versus Cumanos*.<sup>3</sup> Most research places *Terra Burza* in Burzenland, south-east of Transylvania. The purpose of the Teutonic knights when settling here was that of “expanding the kingdom” and protecting it from Cuman attacks. Knights are granted the right to build wooden fortifications, customs exemptions, salt mines, as well as half of the gold and silver they came upon.<sup>4</sup> Documents indicate that Burzenland was *desertam et inhabitatam*,<sup>5</sup> a phrase which probably does not state it was unpopulated, but that it was outside

<sup>1</sup> Ioan-Aurel Pop, “Unele urmări în plan confesional ale cruciadei a IV-a (1204) în centrul și sud-estul Europei,” in *Istorie și ideologie. Omagiu profesorului Stelian Brezeanu la 60 de ani* (Bucharest, 2002), pp. 55–67.

<sup>2</sup> Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 1, doc. 1; DIR, XI–XIII, C, I, pp. 150–151, doc. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Șerban Turcuș, *Sfântul Scaun și românii în secolul al XIII-lea* (Bucharest, 2001), p. 217.

<sup>5</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 1–4, doc. 1–2.

royal jurisdiction and that no one could claim rights over it.<sup>6</sup> As for the Cuman threat, it came from the tribes of this origin that settled in areas south and east of the Carpathians and who entered Hungary through mountain passes and through Burzenland. The Cumans had come in the Lower Danube area in the latter half of the 11th century. Hungary faces a Cuman attack for the first time in 1085–1086, when the tribes headed by Kutesk entered the kingdom by the north-east route, possibly via the Verecke pass.<sup>7</sup>

Documents of the Hungarian chancellery mention “that part of Cumania which lies beyond the mountains”, which was allegedly donated to the Teutons, without stating exactly where it lay.<sup>8</sup> This inaccuracy in sources, that generates confusions and controversy, is also encountered where Kreuzburg (*Cruceburg*) is concerned, a castle (*castrum*), that the Teutons had supposedly rebuilt (*quod fratres predicti de novo construxerant*), and which was located in a land neighbouring the “Brodnic boundaries” (*ad terminos Prodnicorum*).<sup>9</sup> The stronghold was placed by some researchers near Teliu, at Transylvania’s borders, or beyond the mountains, in Tabla Buții, Câmpulung, Crăciuna or Cetățeni.<sup>10</sup> Sources do not yet allow us to pinpoint its location. The only stronghold that we are certain to have been Teutonic is Feldioara, in south-east Transylvania.<sup>11</sup> We can be sure that trading posts developed near fortifications mentioned by sources, regardless of whether they were erected south or north of the mountains. Walls offered protection, with the presence of the knights enticing even more merchants.

<sup>6</sup> Turcuș, *Sfântul Scaun*, p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Spinei, *Marile migrații din estul și sud-estul Europei în secolele IX–XIII* (Iași, 1999), pp. 232–234. For the Cumans in the Balkans, see also István Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars. Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 13–68.

<sup>8</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 16, doc. 7; p. 18, doc. 8.

<sup>9</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 1–4, doc. 1–2.

<sup>10</sup> P. Binder, “Contribuții la localizarea Cruceburgului și unele probleme legate de ea,” *Culegere de studii și cercetări* (Brașov) I (1967), pp. 127–134; József Laszlovszky, Zoltán Soós, “Historical Monuments of the Teutonic Order in Transylvania,” in *The Crusaders and the Military Orders Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, eds. Zolt Hunyadi, József Laszlovszky (Budapest, 2001), p. 331; N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1993), p. 95; Gh. I. Moiescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova până la sfârșitul veacului XIV* (Bucharest, 1942), p. 3; P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii românești. Problemele istoriografiei române*, ed. Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest, 2000), p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> Laszlovszky, Soós, “Historical Monuments,” pp. 326–336.

Documents of the time refer to the Danube as a boundary of the land left in 1222 by the king under Teutonic influence, thus suggesting a certain degree of authority by the order over land south of the Carpathians.<sup>12</sup> 14 years of control of Burzenland by the order were probably not enough for the Teutonic authority to reach and to consolidate near the Danube. Knights were not numerous in this area, which prevented them from massive political and military interventions south and east of the Carpathians.<sup>13</sup> This idea is also supported by the challenging of the authenticity of the 1222 bull, which was probably drafted later on (around 1231–1232), with the purpose of enforcing the claims of Teutons evacuated from Transylvania by King Andrew II in 1225.<sup>14</sup>

After the knights' departure, the king took direct initiative south of the Carpathians. The first known measures towards the religious conversion of the population beyond the mountains are taken. The creation of the bishopric of Cumania in 1227, only two years after the Teutons left, shows that Hungarian kings readily played their part in the crusade against the heathen and the "schismatic". One cannot rule out a possible organization of the new bishopric in the area formerly controlled by the Teutons. The king wished to avoid a new Teutonic incident, so Teodoric the Dominican was appointed bishop. He, as prior of the Dominican "province" of Hungary, maintained the ecclesiastical link with the kingdom's powers.<sup>15</sup> The foundation of a bishopric beyond the Carpathians sought to bring this area under Latin influence. Although the bishoprics belonged to the "Cumans", in fact, the goal was not only the conversion of this still heathen people, but also that of bringing the local population to the Roman Church. One of the few sources that remains is the letter from Pope Gregory IX, sent on the 14th of November 1234 to Bela, son of King Andrew II. This document mentions *quidam populi, qui Walati vocantur*, who had their own bishops (referred to as *pseudoepiscopis* in the text), and who held *Grecorum ritum*. This situation called for "a Catholic bishop, as is fit for that people" (*ut catholicum eis episcopum illi nationi conformem*).<sup>16</sup> The text

<sup>12</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 1–4, doc. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Spinei, *Marile migrații*, p. 276.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Holban, *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII–XIV* (Bucharest, 1981), pp. 31–44.

<sup>15</sup> Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 20, doc. 9.

of the document also refers to the Romanians beyond the mountains with terms such as *populus* and *natio* as well, suggesting local political and religious structures that the Cumans had tolerated, in exchange for paying a tribute.<sup>17</sup> A controversial issue was the vast expanse under jurisdiction of the Cuman bishopric. The eastern boundary was probably delineated by the Siret river. Rogerius the monk, when describing the Mongol attack in 1241 in his *Carmen miserabile*, mentions Bochetor the chieftain who, after having crossed the Siret in an unstated location reached the “country” of the Cuman bishop.<sup>18</sup> The Hospitaller Charter (1247) mentions the *terra Cumaniae*, beyond the river Olt and Transylvania’s mountains, a land where the Knights Hospitaller were supposed to collect revenue from.<sup>19</sup> The western border of the Cuman bishopric was somewhere between Siret and Olt, probably on the Ialomița river.<sup>20</sup> To the south, the land of the bishopric spread close to the Danube, and its centre was in *civitas Milcoviae*.<sup>21</sup> But while the bishopric of Cumania comes to occupy the territory that the Teutons controlled prior to 1225, it also spread over land in Transylvania, Burzenland, more specifically.<sup>22</sup>

Hungary also relied on the *banat* of Severin for support south of the Carpathians. The emergence of this structure, dependent on the kingdom, was related to the conflict between Hungary and the Bulgarian empire. This occurred in the former half of the 13th century, and determined a retracing of the southern and the eastern boundaries of the kingdom. The expanse covered by the *banat* could not be accurately determined. I. C. Filiti believed it covered the present-day Banat and part of the county of Mehedinți.<sup>23</sup> Recently, Viorel Achim stated that the *bans* of Severin had authority over a vaster land, spreading over the area north of the Danube, from the eastern border of the Caraș county, the peaks of the Banat mountain and all the way to the Olt river.<sup>24</sup> The first mention made of a Severin *ban* dates back to

<sup>17</sup> Pop, “Unele urmări,” p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> *Carmen miserabile* in *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. V, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 21, doc. 10.

<sup>20</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39; see also Sergiu Iosipescu, “Drumuri comerciale în Europa centrală și sud-estică și însemnătatea lor politică (sec. XIV–XVI),” *AIIAI*, vol. XIX (1982), p. 275.

<sup>21</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 29, doc. 12; Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 460–461.

<sup>23</sup> I. C. Filiti, “Banii și caimacamii Craiovei,” *AO*, III (1924), p. 198.

<sup>24</sup> Viorel Achim, “Despre vechimea și originea Banatului de Severin,” *RI*, new series, vol. V, no. 3–4 (1994), pp. 235–236; Viorel Achim, “O formațiune medievală

1233, when a Luca or Iula *ban* features as witness for an oath.<sup>25</sup> Maria Holban studied the evolution of the Severin *banat* in its first decades of existence and concluded that it had a contradictory development. The reason: times of unrest. Hungary and Bulgaria were at war, and the Mongols invaded in 1241. The above author believes that it was only after the situation became more stable (after 1260), that a true *banat* existed in Severin.<sup>26</sup> Viorel Achim challenges these conclusions. He explains the scarcity of sources mentioning the *banat* (one of Holban's arguments) by Severin's location: a border province, where the noblemen of the kingdom did not yet hold domain.<sup>27</sup> We can be sure that the Severin *banat* was used by the king of Hungary both as support against the Bulgarians, and to control lands inhabited by the Romanians south of the Carpathians.

The Mongol attacks further enhanced the state of transition specific for the region. We cannot be sure to what extent the great attack of 1241–1242 affected the territory of future Wallachia.<sup>28</sup> The main Mongol armies crossed through north, via Moldavia, the territories south of the mountains being left for lesser troops. In Wallachian settlements of the time, archaeological excavations indicated no traces of a fire or destruction.<sup>29</sup> It is likely that these territories also came under Mongol rule, although it seems that their domination was manifested chiefly as a tribute paid regularly by local rulers. When compared to Moldavia, the Mongols (Rom. *tătari*) left fewer traces in the toponymy or on institutions, so we may state that Wallachian land found itself only in the area of indirect domination of the Golden Horde.<sup>30</sup> Politically, the

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de graniță în sud-estul Banatului: Craina,” in *Banatul în evul mediu. Studii* (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 161–176.

<sup>25</sup> Holban, *Din cronica*, p. 49, 57–58.

<sup>26</sup> Holban, *Din cronica*, pp. 60–65, 85–89.

<sup>27</sup> Achim, “Despre vechimea,” pp. 236–237.

<sup>28</sup> For the great invasion in 1241 and a history of the Mongol empire, see George Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven, 1963); Bertold Spuler, *History of the Mongols: Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1972); James Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen: the Mongol Invasion of Europe* (New York, 1979); Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy* (Oxford, 1992); Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow, 2005); Alexandru Gonța, *Românii și Hoarda de Aur. 1241–1502* (München, 1983); Victor Spinei, *The Great Migrations in the East and South East of Europe from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century* (Cluj-Napoca, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> Mircea D. Matei, *Geneză și evoluție urbană în Moldova și Țara Românească până în secolul al XVII-lea* (Iași, 1997), pp. 68–69.

<sup>30</sup> Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 98.

Mongol domination, formal though it may have been, eliminated the support the Hungarian powers had south and east of the Carpathians. The Cuman bishopric was laid to waste.<sup>31</sup> The first few years after the invasion were a time of trouble for the Hungarian Kingdom, which had to rebuild itself. Fortifications were restored, or new ones were erected, liberties charters were granted to devastated towns and diplomacy was employed to gain help in times of need from the pope and the Western rulers. This policy also covers the granting of a privilege to the Knights Hospitaller in 1247.

Their order was founded in early 12th century by the Blessed Gerard. His mission was to look after the sick or injured pilgrims in Holy Land. Over time, this order evolved into a military monk order, influencing other orders to come, such as that of the Teutons. It also included, among its European possessions, those in Hungary, which dated back to the reign of King Geza II (1141–1162).<sup>32</sup> By attracting the Hospitallers south of the Carpathians, King Bela IV had two goals in mind: first of all, ensuring the kingdom's defence in its vulnerable flanks (south and east); and secondly, continuing the policy of expanding in territories over which it laid claim. The charter granted to the knights in June 1247 is the most valuable and rich source of historical data in the 13th century on land inhabited by the Romanians outside the Carpathians. Along with other lands, this document granted the Knights Hospitaller several territories: the Land of Severin and its mountains (*totam terram de Zeurino cum alpibus ad ipsam pertinentibus*), the local knezats of Ioan and Farcaş up to the Olt river (*kenazatibus Ioannis et Farcaşii usque ad fluvium Olth*) and Cumania, beyond Olt and the Transylvanian mountains (*a fluvio Olth et alpibus Ultrasiluanis totam Cumaniam*). Save for the donation (*excepta*), there were: Voivode Litovoi's knezat, left for the Romanians (*terra kenazatus Lytuo woiauode, quam Olatis relinquimus*) and "the country of Seneslau, voivode of the Romanians" (*terra Szeneslai, woiauode Olatorum*), which was seen as part of Cumania.<sup>33</sup>

Romanian historians are in complete agreement in regard to this document, seeing it as a major tool for interpreting political, social, and economic matters north of the Danube in mid 13th century. The document confirms what was only surmised in 1234, the existence

<sup>31</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 29, doc. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Turcuş, *Sfântul Scaun*, pp. 234–235.

<sup>33</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 21, doc. 10.



of structures called *terra*, headed by knezes or voivodes. These small local states existed before 1247 or 1241, and were forced to walk on a tight rope to survive, having relations with both the Mongols, and the Hungarians.<sup>34</sup> The fact that this document draws a line between the title of “voivode” and that of “knez” emphasizes the existence of a political hierarchy among the leaders and the states of the region, as well as the fact that Litovoi and Seneslau were privileged by the Hungarian king.<sup>35</sup>

The geographical layout of states at 1247 represented and still represents a subject of much debate in Romanian historiography. Litovoi’s country was placed in the northern part of the territory west of the Olt river (which would eventually come to be known as Oltenia), possibly on the upper reaches of the Jiu river. They were connected with the Land of Hațeg (*terra Harszoc*), from Transylvania across the mountains. The knezats of Ioan and Farcaș were probably in eastern Oltenia, whereas Seneslau’s country was beyond the Olt, and scarcely documented.<sup>36</sup> The document mentions those states as being under the sovereign hand of the king of Hungary, their rulers having military obligations and being forced to yield a part of their income to him. The vassal relation forced the knezes and the voivodes to help the Knights Hospitaller “by their military means”, the knights having to “offer their support and help, as much as possible, in similar times”. In granted territories, the order also had legal rights, a context in which *maiores terae* are mentioned, who had the right to make an appeal to the royal court.<sup>37</sup> Even if their names are not noted, we may assume that they were the elite of local society. The Latin chancellery uses terms such as *maiores* or *meliores* only in reference to the upper echelons of society, as opposed to the *mediocres*, a term reserved for those lower in status.<sup>38</sup> The 1247 charter distinguishes between these *maiores*

<sup>34</sup> Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Sergiu Iosipescu, “Românii din Carpații Meridionali la Dunărea de Jos de la invazia mongolă (1241–1243) până la consolidarea domniei a toată Țara Românească. Războiul victorios purtat la 1330 împotriva cotozirii ungare,” in *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, ed. Nicolae Stoicescu (Bucharest, 1980), pp. 42–43; Radu Popa, “Premisele cristalizării vieții statale românești,” in *Constituirea statelor feudale*, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, ed. Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest, 2000), p. 285; Papacostea, *Românii*, pp. 139–140; Holban, *Din cronica*, p. 82.

<sup>37</sup> When blood was spilled.

<sup>38</sup> Radu Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului în orașele Țării Românești și Moldovei (sec. XV–prima jumătate a sec. XVI),” *Cumidava* (Brașov) vol. IV (1970), p. 92.

*terae* and *nobiles* as well, who were to come from other areas in lands granted to the Knights Hospitaller. The document also communicates information regarding the religious life of the community. It mentions “churches built and those to be built” (*ecclesiis constructis et construendi*), which Catholic bishops had rights over. Reference is probably made to the religious buildings erected south of the Carpathians following the missionary effort before the Mongol invasion (in 1237, Dominicans were most definitely present in “the Land of Severin”).<sup>39</sup> The Hospitallers were also monks, their mission south of the Carpathians being both political, and religious in nature. The charter also includes various economic data. The “income” that was to be derived from mills, haystacks, pastures and fish markets near the Danube are mentioned several times. The Celei ponds find their place as well in the text, and are one of the few places identifiable today as well. This income would not have existed and would not have been gained without commercial exchanges, a method that also yielded part of the donations or the tribute owed to the Mongols. Local trading posts existed for commerce, where the merchants and the local population met regularly.

Although it captures the local state of affairs to a certain degree, it is unknown whether the 1247 document had ever reached completion. Şerban Turcuş believed that the Knights Hospitaller did not come to receive their 1247 donation, probably discontent about having to share the benefits in the new lands with the king.<sup>40</sup> In a recent article, Anthony Luttrell identified several letters from King Bela, who informed the pope in 1250 and 1254 that some Hospitallers had fought the heathen Cuman and the Bulgarian “schismatics” near the border, but around 1260 they no longer dealt with this issue, most likely.<sup>41</sup> We may infer that opposition by local rulers, allies of the Mongol, had prevented this plan from being executed.

Regardless of whether the donation granted to the order of monks-knights materialized or not, or whether it met the expectations of the Hungarian king, the Hospitaller Charter emphasizes the state of development in Romanian society. Those political and territorial structures

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<sup>39</sup> DH, vol. I, part 1, p. 153, doc. 115. A 1253 document by Pope Innocent IV mentions the Dominicans in Cumania (DH, vol. I, part 1, p. 255, doc. 195).

<sup>40</sup> Turcuş, *Sfântul Scaun*, pp. 240–242; Holban, *Din cronica*, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Luttrell, “The Hospitallers in Hungary before 1418: Problems and Sources,” in *The Crusaders and the Military Orders*, pp. 271–272; DH, vol. I, part 1, p. 259, doc. 199.

referred to as *terra* in Latin documents (Rom. *țara*, Old Slav. *zemlia*) is confirmed mid 13th century. Future historic sources would mention this *terra* as well; the medieval Romanian states of Wallachia (Rom. *Țara Românească*) and Moldavia (Rom. *Țara Moldovei*) were named as such in documents.<sup>42</sup> In Western and Central Europe, the *terra* was a community rightfully formed on the level of ethnic duchies, which became a feudal institution with an economic, social, and political content in the 12th–13th centuries.<sup>43</sup> On Romanian-inhabited land, recent research showed that *terra* is an institution which undergoes a slightly different evolution, as influenced by the political, social and geographical status of this territory. Radu Popa and Șerban Papacostea see it as a political, *de jure* entity, which corresponded to a territory and had the land, the “people”, and internal structures as its components. Politically, in the 13th century, these *terrae* are ruled by knezes and voivodes. The knez exerted power over a group of villages, within a region with natural borders. The voivode was superior to the knez, having obtained his authority by delegation or by force from a group of knezes.<sup>44</sup>

Stelian Brezeanu suggests that the institution of *terra* in the Romanian area was staggered across different periods:

1. the archaic period, when villages with a mainly agrarian structure merged;
2. the “feudal” period, centuries 9th–14th, when hierarchies developed;
3. the political period, specific only to regions south and east of the Carpathians; in Transylvania, the “feudal” *terra* was emptied of its content by integrating and transforming it within the kingdom of Hungary.

The *terrae* of the final period were fully fledged after a vast political divorce from the higher powers around.<sup>45</sup> In this theoretical approach, which seeks to unveil the development of political structures in the

<sup>42</sup> Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 124.

<sup>43</sup> Stelian Brezeanu, “Model european și realitate locală în întemeierile statale medievale românești. Un caz: “Terra Bazarab,” in *Romanitatea orientală în eul mediu de la cetățenii romani la nașterea medievală* (Bucharest, 1999), p. 211.

<sup>44</sup> Popa, “Premisele,” pp. 28–33; Papacostea, *Românii*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>45</sup> Brezeanu, “Model european,” pp. 211–220.

area inhabited by the Romanians, a point should be made. Litovoi and Seneslau's states at 1247 can be attached to the "feudal" period, especially when placed in context of the vassal relations between their leaders and the Hungarian king. Nothing is known on the nature of relations between local rulers and their subjects. They probably evolved in much similarity with vassal relations in the West, but preserving strong specific features. Sources do not mention, neither at this point, nor in the future, any vassal pledge or any binding agreement in writing or spoken between boyars (local nobles) or between the prince and the boyars. This is why Romanian historians avoided the terms "vassal" or "feudal" when relations in the higher orders of Romanian society were discussed. From the 13th century on, the only ones involved in these kinds of relations were local voivodes or princes, solely with the kings of Hungary or Poland.

Petre P. Panaitescu and Radu Popa researched local territorial and political structures that they called "river valley knezats", given their location.<sup>46</sup> In the language of the place, they were more likely called *județe*, this also being the name that they are given as administrative units in future Wallachia. The name of *județ* is the Latin equivalent of "knez".<sup>47</sup> The later administrative organization of Wallachia allows us a possible interpretation of the development of these small states. Until modern times, the number and, roughly, the ancient form of the *județe* were kept. We believe they are next in line to former knezats. Such continuity is natural. As Wallachia came to its final territorial structure, the integration of previous forms of organization in the new state became easier than the creation of new ones. Transylvania displays a similar situation. Radu Popa brought the appropriate arguments in favour of the continuity of the older *terra* of Hațeg, which survived as a district after the area came under the control of the king of Hungary. In the 14th–15th centuries, the district bore the same name and the borders of the previous *terra* were intact.<sup>48</sup> The Land of

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<sup>46</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 162–169, 280–286; see also P. P. Panaitescu, *Obștea țărănească în Țara Românească și Moldova. Orânduirea feudală* (Bucharest, 1964), p. 29; Radu Popa, *Țara Maramureșului în veacul al XIV-lea*, 2nd ed. by Adrian Ioniță (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 143–160; Radu Popa, *La începuturile evului mediu românesc. Țara Hațegului* (Bucharest, 1988), pp. 156–183.

<sup>47</sup> *Instituții feudale din Țările Române. Dicționar*, eds. Ovid Sachelarie, Nicolae Stoicescu (Bucharest, 1988), pp. 108–109.

<sup>48</sup> Popa, *La începuturile evului mediu*, pp. 249–259.

Maramureș faced a similar situation.<sup>49</sup> In Wallachia, there is no actual foreign control, the old knezats surviving in what shape they were in when integrated in the medieval state.<sup>50</sup> Most were along a river valley, their shape being determined by the direction and the elongation of that valley. These are the features of the county of Jiu, situated in the upper reaches of the river bearing the same name.<sup>51</sup> In Oltenia, the only exception to this is the Danubian county of Mehedinți, which was initially blended in the *banat* of Severin. On the valleys of the Jaleș, the Motru and the Gilort, smaller counties existed, bearing the name of the rivers that crossed them. The county of Vâlcea stood on the Olt valley. Its name can be linked with the knezat of Farcaș, as mentioned in the Hospitaller Charter.<sup>52</sup> The land that Litovoi controlled in 1247 probably encompassed more such counties, former knezats or groups of knezats, thus being a political body. The one heading this assembly of knezats had the title of “voivode”.<sup>53</sup> Even if it would become part of Wallachia, the area west of the Olt would preserve a certain degree of autonomy, which would later be seen in the status of towns.

In the land east of the Olt (later called Muntenia), the process is just as easy to follow, counties spanning west to east, along the river valleys. The counties of Olt, Argeș, Dâmbovița, Prahova, Buzău, Râmnicul Sărat and Ialomița are on the valleys of rivers bearing these names. The counties of Muscel and Pădureț were on higher ground. Their name comes from the hilled up area they were in. Another county, that of Săcuieni, spread over the Teleajen river valley. It owes its name to the native land of colonists arriving here. They were the Romanians and the Hungarians coming from the Szekler area in Transylvania. Exceptions to this rule are in the area close to the Danube, much more exposed to attacks by Turkic peoples:

1. the county of Romanați;
2. the county of Teleorman, which was named after the river which crossed it (in its turn, the river was named after a forest, *Delî-orman*, a Turkic, probably Cuman name);

<sup>49</sup> Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, pp. 195–202.

<sup>50</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, p. 104; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 281–284; Paul Negulescu, “Istoricul județelor în România,” *Revista de Drept Public*, vol. XVII, no. 1–2 (1942), pp. 88–101.

<sup>51</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 118, doc. 62; p. 450, doc. 276; III, p. 303, doc. 184.

<sup>52</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, p. 285; vol. II, p. 280.

<sup>53</sup> Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, pp. 183–195.

3. the county of Vlașca, situated in a swampy area, with numerous small rivers, one of these also giving the county its name;
4. the county of Ilfov, on the lower reaches of the rivers of Argeș, Dâmbovița and Colentina;
5. the county of Brăila, later developed, after the town of Brăila became the most important Danubian port in Wallachia.

Counties in the flatlands, which ran parallel to the Danube, did not follow the same pattern as counties in the hill areas. Being more marginal and facing a more significant Turkic and Mongol threat, they were assimilated only when Wallachia reached the final stages in its emergence. This is confirmed by the fact that the preserved documents mention only later the counties of Muntenia, as opposed to those in Oltenia. In the vast expanses between southern Oltenia and southern Moldavia, a large number of place names and names of water are reminiscent of the Turkic period: Caracal, Berindei, Cumani, Vadul Cumanilor, Desnățui, Călmățui, Covurlui, Suhurlui, Burnaz etc. Such names are less frequent in the higher area of Wallachia.<sup>54</sup> Demographic research in recent decades, although incomplete and going on minimal sources, revealed the existence of population clusters on the river valleys in the hill area, whereas the fields seem less inhabited.<sup>55</sup> The historical tradition recorded the expansion of Wallachia, from the mountains towards the Danube:

[...] “and thus [the country] having stretched to the Danube and to the Siret”; [...] “reaching the waters of Siret and even Brăila, others made southward, in each and every place, so they built towns and villages to themselves to the edges of the Danube and to the Olt”.<sup>56</sup>

Made up of only one knezat or after several knezats merged, the future counties developed in depressions and on river valleys. This was because the landscape features were beneficial in themselves, the settlements could communicate easily, as well as trade and defend them-

<sup>54</sup> Victor Spinei, *Realități etnice și politice în Moldova meridională în secolele X–XIII. Români și turanici* (Iași, 1985), pp. 149–155.

<sup>55</sup> Ion Donat, “Așezările omenești din Țara Românească în secolele XIV–XVI,” *SRDI*, vol. IX, no. 6 (1956), pp. 80–83; Ștefan Olteanu, *Societatea românească la cumpănă de milenii (secolele VIII–XI)* (Bucharest, 1983), pp. 24–25, 31.

<sup>56</sup> *Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești de Radu Popescu vornicul*, ed. Constantin Grecescu (Bucharest, 1963), p. 5; *Istoria Țării Românești, 1290–1690. Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*, eds. C. Grecescu, D. Simionescu (Bucharest, 1960), p. 2.

selves. Each county had regular marketplaces (*târg*) where goods were exchanged. Most future towns grew out of them. Marketplaces had a noteworthy layout, which depended on rivers. Longer rivers had two main settlements, one for the upper reaches, and one for the middle of the river. The lower reaches were usually in the fields and had fewer *târgs*, since more exposed to Mongol, and then, Ottoman attacks. The higher ground had: on the Dâmbovița river, the stronghold and the *târg* of Cetățeni and the future town at Târgoviște; on the Argeș river, the future towns of Argeș and Pitești; on the Olt river, the future towns at Râmnic<sup>57</sup> and Slatina; on the Jiu river, the *târgs* of Târgul Jiului and Craiova. This was the development stage of Romanian society at the end of the 13th century, a society ready to advance to more complex forms of organization.

The political evolution of the area south of the Carpathians after 1247 is just as blurry. Mongol pressure persisted. Two major attacks occurred in 1260–1261 and 1285–1293, with the Hungarian kingdom a direct target. The kingdom's position south of the Carpathians was also weakened by the deep crisis that ravaged the Hungarian state, a crisis which worsened at the turn of the century, once the Arpadian dynasty died out.<sup>58</sup> This is the backdrop against which the small Romanian states start to sever the ties that bound them to the Hungarian kingdom. The first few steps of this process occur in Litovoi's territory. Several texts, issued in 1285 and 1288, document the political climate here. In 1285, Ladislaus IV (1272–1290) donated several domains to *magister* George, as reward for loyal service in various battles. Fights with Litovoi are mentioned, who had become disloyal and no longer paid his dues to the king. Following the reprisals, led by George, Litovoi is killed, and his brother, Bărbat, is captured. He redeems himself by paying "a very large sum" and accepts the reinstated *tributum*.<sup>59</sup> This was carried out when Ladislaus began his reign and was still a minor, in the first few years after 1272.<sup>60</sup> The above-mentioned Litovoi must be the one mentioned in 1247 or a descendant of his with the same name who tried to extend and rule over the entire land of Oltenia.

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<sup>57</sup> There were two towns by the name of Râmnic, one in Oltenia (simply called Râmnic), and another in Muntenia (called Râmnicul Sărat): DRH, B, I, p. 42, doc. 17; p. 260, doc. 157; p. 457, doc. 280.

<sup>58</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 107–110.

<sup>59</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 30, doc. 13; p. 34, doc. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Iosipescu, "Românii din Carpații," pp. 51–52.

Bărbat's presence and his role in the events hint at a possible hereditary rule of the country. Even though it failed, this attempt to discard Hungarian influence marks the dawn of political emancipation in the area. Although the tribute was reinstated, the document makes no further reference to the lands that the conflict started over. They most likely remained under control by Litovoi's followers.<sup>61</sup>

The Mongol expeditions in 1285–1293 further eroded the power of the Hungarian king. This was how all the territories between the Carpathians and the Danube, including those in Oltenia, could be brought under a single ruler, probably a Mongol ally.<sup>62</sup> In July 1324, a document issued by Charles Robert, the new king of Hungary, mentions the *magister* Martin sent as envoy to a leader south of the mountains, Basarab, called *woyuodam nostrum Transalpinum*.<sup>63</sup> One year later, the two parties fall at odds with each other, since Basarab is considered disloyal (*sancte regis corone infidelem*).<sup>64</sup> The ethnical origin of the latter is subject to debate, some claiming him to be Pecheneg or Cuman. He was most likely a Romanianized Turk.<sup>65</sup> The above sources show that a series of new developments had occurred up to 1324 south of the Carpathians. The vassality towards the king of Hungary had been kept, but the reference to *terra* and to its leader is different. The new country did not have a specific name for the Hungarian chancellor, so it is identified as *transalpina*, “beyond the mountains”, its leader being called a “voivode”. In the entire 14th century, the chancellor of the kingdom used the phrase *woyuodam Transalpinum* in documents regarding Wallachia.<sup>66</sup> It indicates a new political state of affairs,

<sup>61</sup> Papacostea, *Românii*, p. 142.

<sup>62</sup> Virgil Ciociltan, *Mongolii și Marea Neagră în secolele XIII–XIV. Contribuția Cînghizanizilor la transformarea bazinului pontic în placă turnantă a comerțului euro-asiatic* (Bucharest, 1998), pp. 253–257.

<sup>63</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 36, doc. 15.

<sup>64</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 37, doc. 16.

<sup>65</sup> Stelian Brezeanu, “Basarab. O nouă ipoteză asupra originilor antroponimului,” in *Identități și solidarități medievale. Controverse istorice* (Bucharest, 2002), pp. 371–386. More recently, using Iorga's arguments, István Vásáry again triggers the vast controversy on the Cuman origin of Basarab (*Basar-aba*, the first part being the participle for the verb *bas*, which meant “to rule”, “to govern”, while *aba* was “father” or “uncle”): Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, p. 134; Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, pp. 151–153.

<sup>66</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46; p. 98, doc. 56; p. 103, doc. 60; for names of Wallachia in sources (*Țara Românească, Terra Transalpina, Ungrovlahia, Basarabia, Valachia Major, Kara-Iflak*), see also Adolf Armbruster, “Terminologia politico-geografică și etnică a țărilor române în epoca constituirii statale,” in *Constituirea statelor feudale*, pp. 251–259.



Wallachia, emerging out of the union of various states west and east of the Olt. The unification was either enacted peacefully or by force by the voivode of one of them. Most Romanian historians believe that, after Litovoi's failed attempt, Basarab, son of Thocomer, took the initiative.<sup>67</sup> Basarab's control over the territory east of the Olt is proven by how the country evolved after 1300, from the mountain towards the Danube, and by the location of the main princely seats (*curți*), all east of the Olt. In 1324, unification was broadly finished, the flatlands being probably conquered after the Mongol crisis (the 1342 death of Khan Uzbek).<sup>68</sup> In 1330, Charles Robert takes military action against the seditious Basarab, whose reasons are probably linked to solving the issue of the land of Severin, claimed by Basarab as well. Basarab's victory led to the temporary emancipation of Wallachia from under Hungarian control.<sup>69</sup>

The local historical tradition paints a different picture when it comes to the dawn of Wallachia. Older chronicles of the country were not kept as originals, but by the truncated copying of information in some Histories written in the 17th century. These texts state that the country was founded when a certain Radu Negru (or Negru Vodă) had arrived. He supposedly crossed the Transylvanian mountains with "a great many following him" from the Făgăraș area in 1290 (6798, Byzantine calendar style) or 1292 (6800).<sup>70</sup> Histories also adopted a tradition in vogue in late medieval circles of scholars, which stated that the Romanians, the Saxons and the Hungarians from Transylvania had contributed greatly to the emergence of the country. Even though the years 1290 or 1292 are challenged by some historians, they are chronologically valid. Chronicles specifically state that Radu Negru had come in "the time of prince Andreiaș". King Andrew III indeed reigned between 1290 and 1301. It would be no surprise if the chroniclers were well aware of the timeline for Hungarian kings, but they had incorrectly noted many of the years for the first rulers of

<sup>67</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 49, doc. 25.

<sup>68</sup> Victor Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI–XIV* (Chișinău, 1994), pp. 208–219; Ion Donat, *Domeniul domnesc în Țara Românească (sec. XIV–XVI)* (Bucharest, 1996), pp. 112–113.

<sup>69</sup> Iosipescu, "Românii din Carpații," pp. 76–93.

<sup>70</sup> The year 1290 in *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2 and *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 3–5; the year 1292 in the Arab version of the chronicle of Wallachia (Virgil Cândea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești (1292–1664) în versiunea arabă a lui Macarie Zaim," *SRDI*, vol. XXIII, no. 4 (1970), pp. 673–681).

Wallachia, as is the case with many of them.<sup>71</sup> The departure of Radu Negru was also linked to a conflict in Făgăraș, between the Romanians and nobleman Ugrinus, who had claimed and was granted this land following an assembly of the nobles in 1291. Romanian representatives did attend this event, but they would no longer be invited at a similar one, the following year. It is likely that Ugrinus' arrival in Făgăraș and Radu Negru's departure are connected, but not transparently enough, because of the lack of sources. The coincidence between the withdrawal of autonomy for Romanians in Făgăraș and the creation of a new state south of the Carpathians is too significant to be overlooked.<sup>72</sup>

Internal documents confirm the existence of Radu Negru only from the 16th century on, his name being linked in many cases to the first days of the country.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, Basarab is not noted by the chroniclers, nor is his conflict with Charles Robert. It is only in *Istoria Țării Românești* that the name Basarab is linked to a family of boyars west of the Olt who had subjected to Radu Negru.<sup>74</sup> In the current state of information, we cannot define the link between Negru and Basarab. It is likely, just as in Dragoș and Bogdan's Moldavia,<sup>75</sup> that they were not at all kin.<sup>76</sup> This would explain why, for almost 200 years, Radu Negru was disregarded in documents issued by the rulers of the country, who all descended from Basarab. Some historians believe that Radu Negru was actually Basarab, the difference in names being that Negru was a nickname, and that Basarab was the real name of the first ruler of the country.<sup>77</sup> If we were to accept the information relayed by chroniclers, his name was in fact Radu. *Cronica franciscanilor* provides us with another point of reference for Radu Negru's reign. In 1304, Margaret, his Catholic wife, had supposedly built the Cloșter church in Câmpulung; in 1764, the foundation act given by Margaret

<sup>71</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2; *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Antal Lukács, *Țara Făgărașului în evul mediu (secolele XIII–XVI)* (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 165–171.

<sup>73</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 327, doc. 278; V, p. 138, doc. 125; VI, p. 159, doc. 128.

<sup>74</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 1–2.

<sup>75</sup> See the chapter on the emergence of towns in Moldavia.

<sup>76</sup> Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Tradiția istorică despre întemeierea statelor românești*, ed. Valeriu Răpeanu (Bucharest, 1980), pp. 87–115.

<sup>77</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, "Descălecat" sau întemeiere? O veche preocupare a istoriografiei românești. Legendă și adevăr istoric," in *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, pp. 97–163.

was still in this town.<sup>78</sup> Somewhere between 1304 and 1324, Radu Negru, the ruler that had crossed the mountains, was eliminated or simply replaced by Basarab.

The rulers that came after Basarab, with all the members of his family, gradually enforced their control over the territory between the Carpathians and the Danube. Basarab's son, Nicolae Alexandru (1352–1364), resumed relations with Hungary. During his reign, the Catholic Church consolidated its standing, the missionaries even communicating that they had swayed the ruler over to Catholic beliefs.<sup>79</sup> However, not only did the ruler remain Orthodox, but he also founded the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Wallachia, located in Argeş (1359).<sup>80</sup> Under Vladislav I (1364–1376), Wallachia entered a conflict with Louis of Anjou, the new Hungarian king, who wished to expand his domain towards the Danube Delta and the sea. Finally, Vladislav declared himself a vassal, the domains that his father had held beyond the mountains (Făgăraş and Amlaş), and Severin being acknowledged as his.<sup>81</sup> The fact that Wallachian rulers controlled Făgăraş confirms the special link between them and this territory. Taking advantage of the crisis of the Mongols and Louis' problems, Vladislav took action in southern Moldavia, expanding his control over it.<sup>82</sup> Radu I (1376–1385) continued the line of his predecessor. Under his command, more Orthodox churches are erected, the Catholic bishopric at Argeş is founded (1381) and the first local coinage begins.<sup>83</sup> The height of power in Wallachia is reached during the reign of Mircea the Old (1386–1418). He also becomes involved in the anti-Ottoman crusade (which would however be a failure, Nikopol—1396), helps Alexandru the Good ascend to the throne of Moldavia and has close relations with King Sigismund of Luxemburg and Serbian, as well as Bulgarian rulers. In early 15th century, Wallachia reaches its largest size: along with the land between the Carpathians and the Danube and the ter-

<sup>78</sup> George Georgescu, "Cronica franciscanilor din 1764, prima istorie a oraşului Câmpulung," *Verbum* (Bucharest) vol. V (1994), p. 339.

<sup>79</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 60, doc. 32; Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domniilor din Ţara Românească şi Moldova. a. 1324–1881, I. Secolele XIV–XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), p. 71.

<sup>80</sup> DH, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 1, doc. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Lukács, *Ţara Făgăraşului*, p. 171–175.

<sup>82</sup> Şerban Papacostea, *Geneza statului în evul mediu românesc. Studii critice*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1999) pp. 128–132; Şerban Papacostea, "Poliuca externă a lui Ştefan cel Mare: opţiunea polonă (1459–1472)," *SMIM*, vol. XXV (2007), pp. 18–19.

<sup>83</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 321–324, 331–338.

ritories granted in Transylvania, Mircea also controlled Dobruja and southern Moldavia, as well as the town of Kilia. Most towns in this area appeared until early 15th century.<sup>84</sup>

*The emergence of towns*

The urbanization of Wallachia also benefited from the existence of some positive factors, but also encountered others that inhibited its growth. They can be divided following a model used by Ștefan S. Gorovei when studying the birth of Moldavia, into determiners, enhancers and circumstantial factors.<sup>85</sup> The first of the three, characterised by the “longue durée”, the slow evolution of structures, are related to the political conditions (the existence of those *terrae*) and the economic ones (the trading sessions held regularly, a heightening in trade relations, the tracing of roads) in the area inhabited by Romanians, in the latter half of the 13th century and in the 14th. The enhancers are different in content and include, among others, the arrival of foreign settlers, whose contribution in the institutional make-up of towns was decisive. The third, the circumstantial factors, have to do with the political evolution of Romanian states, their relations with neighbouring powers, and the economic development of south-eastern Europe. A special feature, the religious factor, influenced to a lesser extent urban emergence, unlike in Western and Central Europe. Until the 16th century, Orthodox monasteries were built far from towns so they wouldn't influence their development.<sup>86</sup>

In the 13th century, Western and Central Europe undergo a vast political and economic expansion to the East. In 1204, Constantinople was conquered by participants in the 4th Crusade, allowing the economic influence of Italian merchants to reach all the way to the Black Sea coast. To the north, Hansa's towns started trading in the Baltic region. More and more settlers (especially German) heeded the call of the king of Poland and the king of Hungary, colonizing the new territories, aiding in their economic growth and in the growth of towns. Mining operations take on a new momentum in the mountains

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<sup>84</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, 2nd ed. by Gheorghe Lazăr (Bucharest, 2000) pp. 251–258, 321–332, 357–403.

<sup>85</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* (Iași, 1997), pp. 29–30.

<sup>86</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, pp. 78–79.

of Poland, Slovakia, Transylvania, Bosnia, and Serbia. The gold and silver extracted here take the European market by storm. They are compounded by an increased demand for: construction wood, cloth and fabric for clothing, spices, but also basic food products, cereals, salt, fish, and wine.<sup>87</sup> The Romanian Principalities were the gateway for trade between Western and Central Europe and the Levant, being the beneficiaries, as well as the suppliers in this trade.

No towns existed north of the Danube for several centuries in a row, a situation common in the entire area of Europe not located between the borders of the Roman Empire. For a short while, towns following the Greek-Roman pattern developed in Ancient Dacia. They never survived the migrations, some disappearing for good, and others living on as rural settlements.<sup>88</sup> As with most cases in the rest of Europe, we cannot draw up a link between towns following the ancient pattern and the medieval one. The latter was a new urban type, even though there are similarities when it comes to their functions. The social and political structures, as well as the notions regarding land ownership, the legal system, and individual freedom underwent a fundamental revision. The backdrop against which the medieval town developed differed, and not without consequence. A key point in the debate on the emergence of the medieval town in the Romanian-inhabited area is that of a *pattern of development* followed by urban centres. Since no tradition existed in this sense, did the town here fall in the pattern that towns in other areas of Europe followed, or an altogether different path?

Most research undertaken in the past few decades shows that areas north of the Danube were not isolated or cut off from the outer world. Towns nearby began developing ever since the 11th century, when the Byzantine empire set its boundary to the river again. Settlements such as Vicina, Dinogeția, Capidava, the settlement in the Păcuilui Soare island, Siliștriu etc., all Danubian ports, had administrative and military purposes in the Byzantine organization system. Archaeological excavations indicated handiwork, as well as the existence of intense trade exchanges in and between these settlements.<sup>89</sup> Their trade also

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<sup>87</sup> Marian Małowist, “The Trade of Eastern Europe in the Later Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe II. Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. by M. M. Postan, Edward Miller, Cynthia Postan (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 525–582.

<sup>88</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, pp. 45–56.

<sup>89</sup> See Ion Barnea, *Dinogeția*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1969); Gr. Florescu, R. Florescu, P. Diaconu, *Capidava. Monografie arheologică*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1958); Petre Diaconu, Silvia Baraschi, *Păcuilui Soare*, vol. I–II (Bucharest, 1972–1977).

extended north of the Danube. A map documenting the inroads made by the Byzantine hyperpyrons in the Lower Danube area includes discoveries of such coins issued until 1261 (by the empire of Nicaea) in Târgoviște, Cetățeni, Turnu (Măgurele), Severin, but also in Moldavia or Transylvania.<sup>90</sup> The transdanubian connections were completed by those with Transylvania and Hungary. The Hospitaller Charter makes several mentions of the “income” and the “money” that the Knights or the king were to collect, as well as the mills, fish and the salt which were to be brought “to the good use of this country and parts of Bulgaria, Greece and Cumania.” All these products were derived from exploiting local resources or by selling/buying.<sup>91</sup> The mention concerning “money” also reflects the existence of coin circulation north of the Danube. The Italian merchants played a significant part in this area. The first mention of their contact with the Romanians dates back to 1246, when the pope mentioned the need to release Greek, Bulgarian, Russian, and Romanian Christians, who had been sold to the Saracen by Italian merchants (who had probably bought them from the Mongols).<sup>92</sup> After 1261, the Genovese gained the upper hand on Venetians in the Black Sea. They concluded the Nymphaion treaty with the Byzantine Empire, contributing to its restoration by providing support in reconquering Constantinople. Residing in Caffa, Cetatea Albă (*Album Castrum*, future Akkerman), Kilia and Vicina, the Genovese became involved in a thriving trade, buying cereals, wax, fish, hides and bringing cloth, linen or spice in kind. For the Genovese to come by what they needed, but also for them to sell what they brought from the Levant, there must have existed a category of buyers. They are most likely the ones heading the local states and those in their circles. They also needed the places to trade. The existence of trade connections between the Romanian-inhabited area and the surrounding regions cannot be denied.<sup>93</sup> Mongols, after stopping their main attacks and creating a vast “empire of the steppes”, instated, by the

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<sup>90</sup> Octavian Iliescu, “L’hyperpère byzantin au Bas-Danube du XI-e au XV-e siècle,” *RESEE*, vol. VII, no. 1 (1969), p. 119.

<sup>91</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 21–27, doc. 10.

<sup>92</sup> Ștefan Pascu, *Contribuții documentare la istoria românilor în sec. XIII și XIV* (Sibiu, 1944), p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Dinu C. Giurescu, *Țara Românească în secolele XIV și XV* (Bucharest, 1973), pp. 141–144.

so-called *pax mongolica*, a climate that favoured trade, which brought them income.<sup>94</sup>

The boost given to trade routes had considerable weight. In a traveller's hierarchy, there are continental, regional, and local roads. A continental road was the one linking Central Europe to the Byzantium, on the Middle Danube valley, from Vienna through Buda, Niš, Philippopol, Adrianople, partly following the route of the old Roman road to Constantinople.<sup>95</sup> Hungary's interest in the south-Carpathian region, as well as the economic development of Transylvanian towns increased the importance of roads crossing the Carpathians and leading down to the Danube, on river valleys. These roads had been lent a more local use until then. 14th century documents such as the one issued by King Louis in 1358<sup>96</sup> or the privilege reinstated for merchants of Braşov by Vladislav I in 1368<sup>97</sup> are late mentions of roads linking Wallachia to Transylvania. They followed the valleys of Buzău, Teleajen or Prahova, the most important being that on the valleys of the Dâmboviţa and Ialomiţa rivers, known as the "Brăila road" or "Braşov road" (according to its two end towns). "Brăila road" becomes the final sector of the regional alternative to the continental road mentioned above, linking Buda to the Danube and the Black Sea via Transylvania. Ultimately, other roads were directed towards the Danube, on the rivers of Olt, passing through Slatina, and on the Jiu, passing through Craiova. Towns developed on these roads as points for rest and trade.<sup>98</sup>

The first sources detailing towns would only be written later, so we will have to rely on information provided by archaeological excavations. In medieval towns in Wallachia, save for minor exceptions (Floci, partly Câmpulung, Bucharest and Târgovişte), no systematic excavations were undertaken, for reasons having to do with the modern network of streets, but also the lack of funding and interest. The oldest traces of a settlement that had urban purposes in the Middle Ages were found in Argeş. Ruins of a seat for a local ruler were unveiled here, a seat with two stages in its evolution. The first stage

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<sup>94</sup> Spinei, *Marile migrații*, pp. 332–333; Lawrence N. Langer, "The Medieval Russian Town," in *The City in Russian History*, ed. Michael F. Hamm (Lexington, 1976), pp. 20–21.

<sup>95</sup> Iosipescu, "Drumuri comerciale," p. 269.

<sup>96</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39.

<sup>97</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>98</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 164–165.

began in the 13th century. In the second, after 1340, Basarab I builds a new palace, probably after the old one had been damaged following in Charles Robert's 1330 attack.<sup>99</sup> A good many historians believe that the centre for Seneslau's state was found in Argeş.<sup>100</sup> This cannot be taken for granted, since we are not aware of any link between the Seneslau of 1247 and the Basarab of 1324. In Câmpulung, excavations occasioned by a restoration of the Catholic church of St Jacob the Great laid open the traces of an older church, built by the Saxons in the latter part of the 13th century. The local *comes*, Laurentius, was buried in this church in the year 1300.<sup>101</sup> Archaeological excavations carried out in Piteşti revealed ceramic fragments belonging to a type that is also encountered in southern Transylvania. It is assumed that this ceramic was manufactured by a group of potters who came to Piteşti in the latter half of the 13th century.<sup>102</sup> It was in Târgovişte that recent excavations pointed at a similar situation, since a 13th–14th century type of ceramic was discovered, and it can be attributed to Saxons.<sup>103</sup> In Râmnic as well, in a medieval house, traces of ceramic related to Transylvanian ceramic were discovered, along with a coin, all dating from the former half of the 14th century.<sup>104</sup> These archaeological findings, although limited to a few towns, confirm the existence of settlements involved in trade and handicraft activities before 1300. The discovery of coins and pottery show that these settlements were superior to villages. Another common and uncontested element stands out: the presence of foreign craftsmen, probably arriving from Transylvania.

We may assume that the above-mentioned settlements were trading posts for the *terra* (as a political structure) and for the valley (as a

<sup>99</sup> N. Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeş (1200–1400). Asupra începuturilor Ţării Româneşti* (Bucharest, 1984), pp. 84–103; see the conclusions at pp. 143–147.

<sup>100</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, pp. 101–102; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 290–291; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 293.

<sup>101</sup> Ştefan Balş, "Restaurarea Bărăţiei din Câmpulung Muscel," *Monumente istorice. Studii şi lucrări de restaurare* (Bucharest) 1969, pp. 9–14.

<sup>102</sup> Dinu V. Rosetti, "Observaţii arheologice privind vechimea oraşului Piteşti," *RMMMA*, vol. XLVI, no. 1 (1977), p. 69.

<sup>103</sup> Luciana Muscă, Tiberiu I. Muscă, "Descoperiri feudale timpurii în Târgovişte, cartierul Suseni," *Valachica* (Târgovişte) vol. XII–XIII (1980–1981), pp. 101–107; Luciana Muscă, "Noi date privind locuirea feudală timpurie la Târgovişte," *Valachica. Studii şi cercetări de istorie* (Târgovişte) vol. XVI (1998), pp. 22–23.

<sup>104</sup> Elena Busuioac, "O casă de oraşean şi documente materiale din sec. XIV–XV la Râmnicul Vâlcea," *SCIVA*, vol. XXXIX, no. 2 (1988), pp. 120–129.



geographical structure) in which they were located, in areas with denser demographics. After mid 14th century, we have information that, in most of these settlements, the ruling authority had its own residences. Although the seats of princes were given much attention in Romanian historiography, it was only seldom stated that they were more than a simple place where the ruler retired.<sup>105</sup> Historians emphasize the aulic role of these seats and minimize the military one. Only some stone fortifications fall in the “stronghold” (Old Slav. *grad*) group, most not linked to towns (the stronghold in Poienari, the stronghold in Cetățeni, on the Dâmbovița). When it comes to their function, all seats for rulers outside or within towns can be considered strongholds, since they were reinforced. Some had stone walls, others had palisades, ditches and an earth slope. From the latter half of the 14th century, most had inhabitable towers or solid rock houses within their bounds. The following question has arisen: had these strongholds been created after Wallachia was fully formed or had they existed earlier on? Many of them existed beforehand and almost all of them were preserved.<sup>106</sup> Most settlements with strongholds became seats of the counties that they were part of, and towns as well, from the 14th century on. The ruling authority imposed a representative for its power, a castellan, with legal duties, who supervised trade routes, collected tax duties and gathered servants in case of military trouble. The local seats regularly provided accommodation for the ruler while he was travelling in the country, supervising military action or seeking comfort in monasteries. Medieval documents in Wallachia refer to them as *dvor* or *stol* (Rom. *curte*). Their role is captured in a letter of Vladislav II, sent to the council of Brașov. Vladislav asked that some weapons sent to Kilia by the voivode of Transylvania, John Hunyadi, were to be brought through *curiam et domus nostram* first.<sup>107</sup> The two terms employed show that seats served several purposes:

1. a symbolic one, as seat of power for the main institution in the country;
2. a legal one, a place where trials were held;
3. a military one, for protecting and accommodating the ruler.

<sup>105</sup> Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 457–459.

<sup>106</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale în Principatele Române,” in *Interpretări românești*, 2nd ed. by Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria-Magdalena Székely (Bucharest, 1994), p. 146.

<sup>107</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 435, doc. 318.

Much like the *curia* or *sedes regiae* in Central and Western Europe, seats or palaces in the towns of the Romanian Principalities were complex in their organization, being centres for internal and external affairs. The seat was at the same time a simple *domus*, a residence, which lodged his family, a large retinue and a garrison.<sup>108</sup>

The ruler had fortified seats all around Wallachia, but especially in Muntenia, east of the Olt river. To the west, in Oltenia, an ancient autonomy lived on. In this area, rulers issued very few documents in the first two centuries of existence for the country. In centuries 14th–16th, sources mention residences in the following towns: Argeş, Câmpulung, Târgovişte, Bucharest, Piteşti, Gherghiţa, Râmnic, Târgşor, Slatina. The Craiova residence of the *ban* of Oltenia is added to them. Unfortunately, the rather early advent of Ottoman domination (in the 15th century)<sup>109</sup> was what led to most of these urban residences to become abandoned or transformed into monasteries in the 16th–17th centuries. This is why we know so little about their size or how vast their fortifications were. Their inclusion in complete programs for archaeological research would offer more insight. Moldavia displays a similar situation.<sup>110</sup>

In their 13th century stage and, based on the few data that archaeological research has provided, it is difficult to claim an urban character for settlements around the seats of knezes and local voivodes. It was only in the next century that fortified seats played in Wallachia the role that strongholds would play in the rest of Europe, since they were points that focused the development of towns around them.<sup>111</sup> The

<sup>108</sup> See also Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270–1380* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 15–33.

<sup>109</sup> In its relations with the Ottoman Empire, the status of Wallachia, and Moldavia as well (though somewhat later) was only that of a tributary state, and not a conquered one. Until the 17th century included, the ruler was elected by the local assembly and was only acknowledged by the sultan; instead the country paid a money tribute and was protected by the Porte; within the country, the ruler kept all his initial prerogatives, and had right of life and death over his subjects. Details in Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: the Classical Age, 1300–1600* (New York, 1973); Mihai Maxim, *Tările Române și Înalta Poartă: cadrul juridic al relațiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu* (Bucharest, 1993); Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: the Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (Boulder, 2000).

<sup>110</sup> N. Grigoraş, “Despre oraşul moldovenesc în epoca de formare a statului feudal,” *SCŞ*, vol. XI, no. 1 (1960), pp. 88–93; Mircea D. Matei, “Probleme ale genezei și evoluției oraşului medieval pe teritoriul României,” *RDI*, vol. XLII, no. 12 (1989), pp. 1174–1175.

<sup>111</sup> Max Weber, *The City*, eds. Dan Martindale, Gertrud Neuwirth (Glencoe, 1958), pp. 78–79.

presence of fortifications favoured urbanization, since it attracted small merchants seeking to sell their products here. Any residence was not only a fortified location, but also a grouping of people, some of higher standing, and others, mere fighters. For the members of these genuine strongholds, the Genovese brought products from Levant: spices, cloth or jewels. There was a market for these products. The only ones who could have afforded such expensive products south and east of the Carpathians in the 13th century were members of the voivodal families, as well as the boyars and their entourage.<sup>112</sup> Craftsmen joined the merchants in such locations. Skilled in handicraft, they undertook pottery, iron processing etc, and were good to have around a noble residence. The various ceramic items uncovered are testimony to the fact that pots were used daily, and not necessarily that they were sold on a large scale. We must not overstate the level of development in these settlements. Some were larger, some smaller, and they probably looked much like a regular village. Until mid 14th century, almost all were in a pre-urban state. Not all settlements with local residences became towns. Some failed to gain higher status, for various reasons.

Along with the fortified residence, another decisive factor in urbanization was the *târg*. As the residence of a knez or voivode was the centre of a region, it was only natural for it to be also the place where the locals came to buy or sell various products. In *târgs*, exchanges were held regularly: weekly, monthly or seasonally. Trading posts existed ever since days of old. Local terms designating the trading post, *nedeia*, *zborul*, but also *târgul*, are Slavic in origin and have entered the Romanian language long before the 13th century. The name *nedeia* indicates a certain regularity, since it means “week” or “Sunday”, whereas the word *zbor* has the meaning of “gathering”, “fair” or “holiday”.<sup>113</sup> *Nedeia* and *zborul* were often held on higher ground and during religious holidays (as was the case in Câmpulung).<sup>114</sup> The trading posts called *târg* were held on lower ground, in places favouring trade, and were often prone to becoming permanent. They were stabilized when several conditions were met:

<sup>112</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 53–54.

<sup>113</sup> August Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești* (Iași, 1939), p. 1434.

<sup>114</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, new series, tom VII, part 1 (Bucharest, 1971), p. 217; Ioan Răuțescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel. Monografie istorică* (Câmpulung-Muscel, 1943), p. 172; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 75–76.

1. the place had the potential of attracting a constant stream of clients for selling-buying in the surrounding area;
2. groups of craftsmen dwelled there, covering a demand for products, meagre though it may have been;
3. the ruler of the area provided incentive for the development of the settlement growing there.

It was no accident that many medieval towns in the Romanian-inhabited territory adopted the name of *târg*, to which was added the name of the river they were built on. In Wallachia and Moldavia, this is a frequent occurrence, but it can also be studied in Transylvania and Hungary, Austria, and other countries in Central Europe. Therefore, it is not a specifically Romanian process.<sup>115</sup> *Târgul Moldova* (Baia), *Târgul Bahlui* (Hârlău) or *Trotuș* are some of the *târgs* in Moldavia. *Târgul Jiului*, *Târgul Gilort*, *Târgul Buzău*, *Târgoviște* and *Târgșor* can be found in Wallachia, and *Târgul Mureș* in Transylvania. They are complemented by numerous other towns which only kept the name of the river they straddled: *Suceava*, *Bârlad*, *Vaslui*, in Moldavia, and *Argeș* and *Râmnicul Sărat* in Wallachia. It can be noted that all towns are near a river. Ever since they were simple villages, their inhabitants sought to position the settlement in a place that would agree with their requirements: a place favoured by the geography, the weather, and the landscape (in case of attacks), but all the while close to roads which followed the water shores. The hearths of rural or urban settlements were rarely set on the shores, but on higher ground that was safe from flooding.

The passage from a pre-urban settlement to an urban one was carried out in 14th century Wallachia. As with many cases of urban development in the rest of Europe, the transition was made through the “suburbs-type” evolution. In the rest of Europe, researchers into urbanization analyzed what they referred to as a “socio-topographic polycentrism”, between the fortification, the suburbs, and the market. This type of evolution favoured the market in Wallachia, a situation which determined the mainly commercial specifics of the medieval

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<sup>115</sup> Karl Gutkas, “Das Österreichische Städtewesen im Mittelalter,” in *Die Mittelalterliche Städtebildung im Südöstlichen Europa*, p. 141.

town here.<sup>116</sup> This process can be witnessed in neighbouring areas, as shown in the previous chapter.

An argument for this type of evolution in Wallachia is provided by the layout of local towns. Research into town outlines shows that all roads converged on the stronghold or the residence, which was in the most favourable position. In this case, the stronghold, a true locus of power, triggered the development of the settlement, and not the other way around. Topographic and archaeological studies reveal the stronghold space separated from the settlement nearby by a stone wall or a wooden palisade, reinforced with an earth slope and a ditch. Natural defences came to complete this array, so the prince's residence was separated from that of the citizens. This separation is rooted in the emergence of those communities, which were initially just suburbs with economic goals that served the residence, as well as the inhabitants of the area around it. This situation applies to the towns of Argeş, Târgovişte, Bucharest, probably Câmpulung and Piteşti. It was here that the stronghold became a polarizing core for the settlement, being a symbol of power and protection.<sup>117</sup> Around the stronghold, research into the outlines of medieval Wallachian centres, hindered significantly by changes in modern times, has indicated the evolution of the central town area around another core: the market.<sup>118</sup> The stronghold or the reinforced residence, as a centre of power, was the first determining factor in urbanization. However, the one that brought it to fruition, its driving force, was the market. Small towns, with no ruler's seats, evolved directly out of local markets.

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<sup>116</sup> Donald Bullough, "Social and Economic Structure and Topography in the Early Medieval City," in *Topografia urbana e vita cittadina nell'alto Medioevo in Occidente*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, no. 21 (Spoleto, 1974), pp. 351–399; *Guide internationale d'Histoire urbaine*, p. 344.

<sup>117</sup> Panait I. Panait, "Cetatea Bucureştilor în secolele XIV–XV," *RM*, vol. IV (1969), pp. 314–316; Nicolae Constantinescu, "Cercetări arheologice de la curtea domnească din Târgovişte," *Documente recent descoperite și informații arheologice* (Bucharest, 1987), pp. 71–78; Petru Diaconescu, "Cercetări arheologice la curtea domnească din Târgovişte," *Valachica. Studii și cercetări de istorie* (Târgovişte) vol. XV (1997), p. 67.

<sup>118</sup> See Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, Radu Radoslav, "Spațiul central al oraşului medieval românesc extracarpatic din secolele XIV–XVI, spațiu al coeziunii sociale. Elemente pentru un studiu comparatist european," *HU*, vol. I, no. 2 (1993), pp. 153–173.

*Terminology*

Wallachia documents drafted in Old Slavonic use three terms in reference to towns: *varoš* (Rom. *oraș*), *trăg* (Rom. *târg*) and *grad* (Rom. *cetate*). The chancellery never used the term *miasto*, which was only in use in Moldavia. In Wallachia, the original meanings of terms used to name towns were strictly related to the aspect, the topography, and the functions of the settlement (*varoš*, *grad*, *trăg*), but also the type of community dwelling there (*varoš*).

The word *varoš* first features in a document issued by Mircea the Old on the 4th of September 1389, being included in the phrase that asserted princely control over the town: *orași gospodstva mi glagolemago Râbnic* (“my town, called Râmnic”).<sup>119</sup> The above phrase appears on several occasions, especially when the issued documents refer to towns, being meant to state the rights the ruler had over them. An analysis of documents until the 16th century shows that, in most cases when a settlement had an urban character, its own institutions and a certain level of autonomy, it was designated by the term *varoš*.<sup>120</sup> *Varoš* is also used in reference to townspeople, the town’s domain or seal, so it is beyond any doubt the term most often employed by the chancellery to indicate a settlement that was urban in character.<sup>121</sup> *Varoš* is also related to the term *miasto*, which carries the same legal weight, indicating a community of townspeople, with a privileged status. As for the origin of the term, experts have yet to agree. Some researchers, though the minority, tend to assign it a Greek origin,<sup>122</sup> but most rely on the Hungarian variant.<sup>123</sup> In Hungarian, *vár* meant “stronghold” (like *grad* in Old Slavonic),<sup>124</sup> therefore *varoš* indicates a settlement developed around a fortification. This meaning makes it synonymous with the Latin term *suburbium*, the Russian *posad*, the Serbo-Croatian *podgradije*

<sup>119</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

<sup>120</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39; p. 102, doc. 52; p. 186, doc. 106; p. 189, doc. 108; p. 219, doc. 128.

<sup>121</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 271, doc. 168; p. 145, doc. 131; p. 284, doc. 175; VII, p. 120, doc. 92; Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Sibiul în secolul XV și XVI* (Bucharest, 1927), p. 75, doc. 67.

<sup>122</sup> Stoianovich, “Model and Mirror,” p. 101.

<sup>123</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Toponimia românească* (Bucharest, 1963), p. 309; *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VII, part 2, p. 265.

<sup>124</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and Society*, p. 19.

or the Romanian *subcetate*.<sup>125</sup> In Wallachia, *varoș* originally designated a settlement developed near a fortification. Following a semantic extension, it indicated a specific type of community, which enjoyed special status (*varoșani*).

In centuries 14th–16th, the term *trăg* was less used than *varoș* in the internal documents of Wallachia. It first of all refers to a market and is derived from Old Slavonic, where it meant “a place for buying and selling”. It was used in the entire area of Slavic languages, in Poland, Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>126</sup> As for the content of the term, we can find most similarities in Serbia, where the word *trg* has three meanings, designating a market, a part of a settlement, but also a type of settlement.<sup>127</sup> In Wallachia, the word has similar meanings, not being as precise as the word *varoș*:

1. its first meaning was that of a place where products were regularly exchanged;<sup>128</sup>
2. part of the town where the market was (the Upper Market and the Lower Market, in Bucharest, Târgoviște and Buzău);<sup>129</sup>
3. pre-urban settlement or a smaller town (Cornățel).<sup>130</sup>

Ever since the latter part of the 16th century, the difference between *târg* and *varoș/oraș* is no longer that visible, as it was in the previous centuries. One of the first few documents where we have identified the word *târg* is the one detailing a renewal of the privilege granted to the town of Brașov by Mircea the Old on the 6th of August 1413.<sup>131</sup> In other documents, the rulers granted some monasteries or noblemen exemption from the *târg* customs duties (the ones in the town market, as it was the case in 1451 and 1469).<sup>132</sup> The local pre-urban settlements could be donated, just like the one in Calafat, which was given

<sup>125</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 165; Coriolan Suciu, *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1968), p. 149; Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. II, pp. 225–228, 457.

<sup>126</sup> Sever Pop, “Sinonimele cuvântului târg în lumina geografiei lingvistice,” *Revista Geografică Română*, vol. I (1938), pp. 49–51; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 23.

<sup>127</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 165.

<sup>128</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom XI, part 2, pp. 334–335.

<sup>129</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 186, doc. 106; p. 219, doc. 128; DIR, XVII, B, IV, p. 367, doc. 377; DRH, B, XXIV, p. 359, doc. 267.

<sup>130</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 76, doc. 59.

<sup>131</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 197, doc. 120; DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>132</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 186, doc. 106; p. 228, doc. 135.

to the monastery at Tismana along with the customs in that passage over the Danube.<sup>133</sup> There were also *târgs* which belonged to boyars, such as Târgul Gilort.<sup>134</sup>

The word *grad* also originates in Old Slavonic, being used everywhere in the Slavic world. It indicates a “reinforced location”, a “stronghold” or a “town” (ruling seat).<sup>135</sup> In its meaning of “fortified location”, the word was adopted in Romanian. On Romanian territory, various place names reminiscent of such places exist: Gradiștea, Horodiștea.<sup>136</sup> In Wallachia, the main meaning of the term, as encountered in documents drafted in Slavonic, was that of “stronghold”: the stronghold of Giurgiu, the stronghold of Dâmbovița (*cetatea Dâmboviței* in Cetățeni), the stronghold Crăciuna and that of Poenari.<sup>137</sup> Ever since 1459, the “stronghold of Bucharest”, also called the “stronghold of Dâmbovița”, or even “new stronghold” (*Novi grad*) is added.<sup>138</sup> Ever since the latter half of the 15th century, the phrase “citadel of the throne” (*nastolnii grad*) comes into use. Until it became common, the clerks in the chancellery also resorted to other words, based on the term *stol* (a synonym for *sedes*), which indicated the seat of the ruler per se.<sup>139</sup> After the Ottoman domination is instated, strongholds in Wallachia decrease in importance, and begin to decay. This is one reason, along with the gradual replacement of Slavonic by Romanian as the formal chancellery language, why the term *grad* fell out of use.

In Latin documents, towns are designated by the following words: *civitas*, *castrum*, *forum*, *oppidum* and *arx*. *Curia* was used for the residence of the prince.<sup>140</sup> *Civitas* is used to designate large towns, be they bishop’s sees or not. Târgoviște appears under all names, except that of *forum: civitas* in a document issued by John Hunyadi; *oppidum* in 1409

<sup>133</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 278, doc. 172; II, p. 426, doc. 224.

<sup>134</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 273, doc. 170.

<sup>135</sup> Pandele Olteanu, *Limba povestirilor slave despre Vlad Țepeș* (Bucharest, 1961), p. 253.

<sup>136</sup> Villages and places called Gradiște in the counties: Vâlcea, Argeș, Buzău, Ilfov, Muscel, Râmnicul Sărat (*Marele dicționar geografic al României*, vol. III, eds. George Ioan Lahovari, C. I. Bratianu, Grigore G. Tocilescu (Bucharest, 1900), pp. 621–623).

<sup>137</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 76, doc. 35; p. 85, doc. 40; p. 285, doc. 176; III, p. 288, doc. 176.

<sup>138</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 203, doc. 118; p. 266, doc. 161; DH vol. XV, part 1, pp. 56–57, doc. 96, 98; pp. 89–91, doc. 153–154, 160; *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1959), p. 17.

<sup>139</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 184, doc. 105.

<sup>140</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 435, doc. 318.



and in several other documents issued after 1500; *castrum* in a 1553 document; *arx* in 1507.<sup>141</sup> Bucharest features as a *castrum* in documents in the 1460–1476 period (*castro fluvii Dombovicha*, *castro Bokoresth*, *Novo Castro*), *oppidum* in a 16th century document and in several documents issued in 1509.<sup>142</sup> The fortified residence in Argeş is called *arx* in several documents issued by Vladislav I and Mircea the Old.<sup>143</sup> It would then lose military purpose and appear as an *oppidum* in documents issued by Neagoe Basarab.<sup>144</sup> The other towns are predominantly called *forum* or *oppidum*: Târgşor is called *Novo Foro* (1413, 1424), Buzău, *oppidum* (1470), and so is Câmpulung (1528).<sup>145</sup> In most cases, when using Latin terms, the clerks actually attempted to translate synonyms from Slavonic. As a rule, *civitas*, *castrum* and *arx* are the equivalents of *grad*, and *forum* and *oppidum* for *trăg*. We do not believe that documents drafted in the chancellery kept the exact meanings these terms had in Latin.

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An analysis of the terms referring to medieval towns raises another issue, that of the time and the venue by which the mentioned terms entered the Romanian area. They probably came into use before the chancellery appeared, which only adopted them. The adoption of the terms *grad* and *trăg* raises no special issues. The large number of toponyms and hydronyms formed with these names all over Romania, Transylvania included, bears witness to this. The moment they entered the Romanian language has to do with when groups of Slavs settled north and south of the Danube, ever since the latter half of the 6th century.<sup>146</sup> The adoption of the term *varoş*, that became the most frequent one associated with towns in Wallachia, is more difficult to trace. It did not enter earlier than the 13th century, when Transyl-

<sup>141</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 395, doc. 286; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 419, doc. II; DH, vol. II, part 1, p. 318, doc. 292; p. 320, doc. 294; vol. II, part 2, p. 553, doc. 445; vol. XV, part 1, p. 283, doc. 513; p. 292, doc. 533; p. 407, doc. 766; p. 490, doc. 910.

<sup>142</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 56, doc. 96; p. 57, doc. 98; p. 189, doc. 344; p. 192, doc. 349.

<sup>143</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 104, doc. 60; p. 175, doc. 106.

<sup>144</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, pp. 235–236, doc. 429, 431.

<sup>145</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 76, doc. 131; p. 199, doc. 121; p. 309, doc. 568.

<sup>146</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 70–83; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 201–212.

vania communities begin settling south of the mountains. The first few groups of Hungarians and Germans arrive when Teutonic knights settle, the bishopric of Milcovia is founded, and the king of Hungary imposed his sovereignty on the local knezes and voivodes. Sources citing the population transfer are few, but enough to prove the existence of this process. It is possible that the arrival of the first colonists began ever since the Teutons were in Burzenland, as a 1223 document suggests.<sup>147</sup> The letter from Pope Gregory IX, on the 14th of November 1234 mentions some Hungarians (*ungari*) and Germans (*theutonici*) who had moved to the Cuman bishopric.<sup>148</sup> Along with the *saxones*, the *theutonici* were already mentioned in Transylvania as *hospites*, being called by the king ever since mid 12th century.<sup>149</sup> We may assume that colonisation south of the mountains also followed a certain pattern, as the Hospitaller Charter suggests for the 13th century. This document indicates that the king allowed the grand master of the order to “populate” the donated lands, provided that he did not allow “peasants in our kingdom, regardless of their status or origin, and Saxons and Teutons in our kingdom”, only if the king himself agreed.<sup>150</sup> The king focused on populating these lands in order to have a more steady dominion, but he did not wish to lose the peasant colonists brought to Transylvania. This was why settlers could be brought from outside the kingdom. Other settlers, this time Saxons from Transylvania, probably crossed the mountains after 1277, when a great uprising that rallied all the Saxons around Sibiu broke out. Other similar riots occurred in 1324 and 1342.<sup>151</sup> In 1333, a source mentions the son of a “most noble lady” in the kingdom of Hungary, who lived in *terra Transalpina*.<sup>152</sup> Historical tradition, as laid down in the chronicles of Wallachia, noted this transfer of population.<sup>153</sup> The arrival of Radu Negru from Făgăraș is accompanied by “many peoples: Romanians, Catholics, Saxons, all manner of them, coming down Dâmbovița, where they set about making a new country.”<sup>154</sup> Among those arriving south of the Carpathians,

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<sup>147</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 7, doc. 3.

<sup>148</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 20, doc. 9.

<sup>149</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. I, pp. 115–121; Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, pp. 100–102.

<sup>150</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 24, doc. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Adolf Armbruster, *Dacoromano-Saxonica. Cronicari români despre sași. Români în cronică săsească* (Bucharest, 1980), p. 161.

<sup>152</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 54, doc. 27.

<sup>153</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 27.

<sup>154</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2.

Germans (Rom. *sași*) were predominant, along with groups of Hungarians. The Saxons were already in control of the passes from Brașov and the Olt valley, which connected Făgăraș and Wallachia, so Radu Negru was granted passage and supported by them. They were driven by economic needs, searching for proper locations to practice trade and crafts. They were followed by Romanians, who left Transylvania for chiefly political and religious reasons, because of the pressure that some kings and noblemen subjected them to. The Saxons preferred to settle in places that allowed for their practice of trade and crafts, in pre-urban settlements, whereas the Romanians remained in villages, witness the numerous settlements called Ungureni (in the subcarpathian area).<sup>155</sup> Later Wallachian documents mention Saxon communities in: Câmpulung, Râmnic, Argeș, Târgoviște. Pitești can also be added to this list.<sup>156</sup> These are the oldest Wallachian towns, but by no accident.

Did settlers have their say in urbanizing these centres? As already shown, the term *varoș* indicated a settlement developed under a stronghold (*vâr*), a suburb with a mainly commercial purpose. Saxon and Hungarian communities, which were already familiar with the term in their area of departure, applied it to their destination settlements, Câmpulung, Argeș, Râmnic and Târgoviște, the ones where we can be certain they settled. They could only name them as such if those settlements were developed as suburbs, not being towns per se; they only kept the original content of the word. Although not always entirely accurate, medieval terminology generally defines a settlement following its topography and its purpose. Whereas the terms *castrum*, *castellum*, *civitas*, *burgus* or *grad* referred to a stronghold, *suburbium*, *posad* or *podgradije* were the names of settlements that emerged near that stronghold. The term *trăg*, as well as its derivatives, only preserves the commercial purpose. South of the Carpathians, *varoș* was used even after settlements were endowed with urban features, it being both a staple of spoken language, as well as one in the “institutional language” of the central authority.<sup>157</sup> This process may be encountered in other areas of the kingdom of Hungary as well, in Croatia, for instance,

<sup>155</sup> DIR, B, veacurile XIII–XVI, *Indicele numelor de locuri*, ed. Ion Donat (Bucharest, 1956), pp. 149–150.

<sup>156</sup> *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. V (Bucharest, 1973), p. 57.

<sup>157</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

where *varoș* was a name for a town.<sup>158</sup> South of the Danube, this same word replaced the outdated *podgradije* and *tărg* after the 15th century.

Although they acknowledge the arrival of groups of colonists in Wallachia ever since the 13th century, most Romanian historians were not so quick in stating they had a leading part in urbanization. Petre P. Panaitescu is among the few to claim this, but without detailing the way the “guests” contributed to the urban development of settlements where they took up residence.<sup>159</sup> The presence of Saxons in future Wallachian towns cannot be dismissed. 15th century sources show that, in most ancient towns, such as Câmpulung, Argeș, Târgoviște and Râmnic, Saxons had a major economic role. The 16th century Reformation dealt a heavy blow to them. Even though they did not suffer the persecutions in Moldavia, Saxons dwindled considerably in number. A large part of them fled to Transylvania, while others turned Protestant. They reverted to Catholicism, only to end up assimilated in the 17th–18th centuries among the local population. Catholic missionaries that visit them in the latter half of the 16th century only witness a shadow of what were once wealthy and influential communities. Identifying the way they settled south of the Carpathians will be no small task. We will admit that their arrival was not the outcome of chance, but that they were called or encouraged to come by local rulers. The king of Hungary could substitute himself to these rulers until approximately 1290, when local opposition (witness the Bărbat and Radu Negru episodes), the Mongol threat, but also disputes inside the kingdom prevented him from any further initiative in this field. His actions, aimed at “populating”, could represent a model for similar, future actions.

Unfortunately, no direct historical evidence suggests that the colonisation of Wallachia had been organized by local princes, as was the case with the Polish and Hungarian kingdoms. Sources are faulty in this respect (and in others as well). Only a little over 20 documents were kept, out of all those issued in the 14th century by rulers, and archaeological excavations avoided areas inhabited by Saxons. Only one document bears testimony to how the ruler considered settlers south of the mountains: “guests”, *hospites*. In 1369, Vladislav I issues a document referring to the Catholics in Wallachia. This document

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<sup>158</sup> Gyorffy, “Les débuts,” p. 134.

<sup>159</sup> Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale,” pp. 141–147.

states the various types of Catholics living in the country: “the town folk” (*civis*), “the people” (*populis*) and “the guests” (*hospites*).<sup>160</sup> Therefore, most Catholics lived in towns, and the *civis* were the first to be mentioned. The “people” follow, a term which suggests the presence of groups of Catholics outside urban centres as well, with the “guests” only mentioned lastly. The clerk drafting up this document belonged to the Latin school: the document is dated according to the closest Calendar saint, Saint Catherine in this case, a habit not specific to the Slavonic documents.<sup>161</sup> We do not believe that the one writing used *hospites* by chance. He was actually referring to settlers brought by the rulers, who had special standing. We are ruling out the possibility that these “guests” were subjects to the king of Hungary, since the document explicitly addresses “all his [the ruler’s] loyal subjects” *fidelibus suis universis*. The text also includes the phrase *cuiuscunque nationis seu idiomatis existant* in completion, showing that Catholics had different origins and languages: German, Hungarian, and others. As with all of Europe, where the term *hospites* indicates the settler category, who enjoyed a different standing than the locals, we must admit that the “guests” coming to Wallachia had a similar status. If these settlers came in an organized context, at the request of rulers, we must admit they received a privilege that safeguarded their different status. This entailed legal liberty and the right to be judged by their own representatives, elected among the community. This privilege was required, since communities were made up of foreigners, who had different beliefs and languages than the population of the place. Saxon Catholic churches south of the Carpathians require special attention, since they were a symbol of autonomy, ensuring the survival of the community. Without any rights acknowledged by the local prince, Catholic churches could not be erected in a mostly Orthodox setting. A second document on Wallachian Catholics, issued in 1369 by the same Vladislav I, informs us of the existence of well-organized ecclesiastical Catholic structures. Parishioners and priests (*plebanis ac rectoribus*) are mentioned, who are requested to honour the bishop sent as a suffragan by Demeter, the bishop of Transylvania. Catholics south of the Carpathians relied on the Bishopric of Transylvania at least since Nicolae Alexandru’s reign:

<sup>160</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 12, doc. 3.

<sup>161</sup> Francisc Pall, “Diplomatica latină cu referire la Transilvania (sec. XI–XV),” in DIR, *Introducere*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1956), pp. 303–305.

“you are subjected by diocesan right, ever since the time of our ancestors and of our departed ruler, blessed be, our dearest father.”<sup>162</sup> As for this period and the successes of Catholicism, the letter from Pope Clement VI which informed King Louis of Hungary on conversions to the Western rite in Romanian-inhabited areas was preserved to this day. Other such letters had been sent “to the noble men, Alexandru, son of Basarab, and to other Romanians,” and to the Franciscan monks already underway to Wallachia.<sup>163</sup> The presence of Catholic communities in the towns-to-be is certified by the churches they built. The first one dates back to the end of the 13th century and was erected in Câmpulung. Others were built in Argeş, Târgovişte and Râmnic.<sup>164</sup> Ultimately, if we were to accept the existence of these *hospites*, we must also acknowledge that they were granted rights, a common practice of the time. A similar situation is that of colonists settled in the Polish and Hungarian kingdoms, where the line of separation was drawn on legal, rather than religious grounds. The Serbian case is very much similar to that of Wallachia. The organization system of Saxon miners was partly adopted in Serbian towns. The office of the *purgari*, initially only specific to mining towns with a predominantly Saxon population, was then adopted in towns which were not associated with Saxons or with mining.<sup>165</sup>

But why was the arrival of colonists in Wallachia encouraged? In the Middle Ages, ethnicity did not carry the same weight or ramifications as it does today. Social belonging, be it to a group, or to a community, and, in this case, to the privileged town community, was more important. Being of Christian faith was also important. Attitude towards strangers in the Middle Ages is well captured by the following adage: *Nam unius lingue uniusque moris regnum inbecille et fragile est*. This was recommended for kings and those that inherited the throne in a collection of teachings attributed to King Stephen I of Hungary and addressed to his son, Emeric (around 1015).<sup>166</sup> We do not believe that rulers of the Romanian Principalities were acquainted with such writings, since it addressed Catholic princes, who were urged to be

<sup>162</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 98, doc. 56.

<sup>163</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 60, doc. 32.

<sup>164</sup> Ioan Răuţescu, *Câmpulung*, p. 361; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 351.

<sup>165</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” pp. 168–169, 172.

<sup>166</sup> *De detentione et nutrimento hospitum* in *Libellus de institutione morum*, trans. Ioseph Balogh, in *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. II (Budapest, 1938), pp. 624–625.

loyal to the Catholic faith and clergy. However, the representation of foreigners, as it transpires in the text, is important. It probably did not capture only the opinions of the author, but also those circulating at that time. Foreigners were seen as useful to any country. They not only brought different languages and customs, but also new techniques for working the land or crafting weapons, adding glamour to the royal residence.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, German settlers brought advanced knowledge when it came to agriculture (crop rotation), metallurgy or mining, playing an active part in trade as well. What's more, they came from an area which had advanced to a higher stage of urbanization and trade relations, being considered the bringers of growth and prosperity for the kingdoms where they settled. Another reason why kings accepted and provided incentive for non-indigenous ethnic elements was the precarious demographics, population density being relatively low in medieval Europe, especially in the eastern half.

Such an attitude towards strangers, widely shared among Central-European kingdoms, could not but influence rulers of the Romanian states. When mention is made of Walerand of Wavrin's Danube expedition (1445), it is also stated that the Wallachian ruler, Vlad the Dragon, had permitted and even helped a group of Bulgarians cross the river and settle in the less populated areas of the country. The response of the ruler after the Bulgarians crossed is noted by the chronicler present: "the ruler of Wallachia was overcome with much happiness at having won so many people and deemed the Bulgarians very brave."<sup>168</sup> This testimony paints an accurate picture of the attitude of the rulers towards colonization. This phenomenon was encouraged, since it was considered beneficial for the country.<sup>169</sup>

In Wallachia, the pieces of what seems to be a true puzzle are hard to come by. We have identified the existence of *hospites*, Catholic, Saxon and Hungarian. The town of Câmpulung can provide us with more details. It is unique in Wallachia, in that it held autonomy much longer than other urban centres in the country did. This evolution is partly due to the state of the region before and after Wallachia had finally reached its final stage. A Saxon community led by a *comes* settled in the 13th century in Câmpulung. More likely, they did not

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<sup>167</sup> Zientara, "Foreigners in Poland," pp. 5–6.

<sup>168</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 112.

<sup>169</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, p. 66.

create a new settlement, but settled near an older, local one. We cannot rule out the possibility that the first settlers arrived here when the king of Hungary was still influential in the area, before 1290. 1300 is the year our first information on Cămpulung dates from. This was when the epitaph of one of the *comes*, the one named *Laurentius de Longo Campo*, was written. This character was the subject of many debates, with the main one revolving around his function. Some researchers believe this *comes* was a representative of the king of Hungary,<sup>170</sup> some see him as a representative of Saxons residing in Cămpulung.<sup>171</sup> Some authors tend to see him as a county ruler arriving from Transylvania along with Radu Negru.<sup>172</sup> As for us, the theory that sees this *comes* as a Saxon representative seems more plausible. It is supported by several arguments, the most important one being the meaning of *comes*. In Transylvania, an area not far from Cămpulung, the *comes* refers to:

1. the county head;
2. the Saxon *graf* (Germ. *Graf, Grew, Greb*), a judge in the Saxon community.<sup>173</sup>

In 1300, the king of Hungary had no control over the area where Cămpulung was, especially since the entire kingdom was in a crisis at that point (the royal bloodline had died out). If the local *comes* did have any connection to the king before 1290, it had disappeared over time. Had he been the ruler of a county, he obviously would have also been withdrawn when the king lost influence in this territory. Laurentius was a *graf* in the Saxon community. Another argument to

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<sup>170</sup> I. Hurdubețiu, *Din trecutul catolicilor la Cămpulung Muscel* (Cămpulung, 1941), p. 5; I. Hurdubețiu, "Puncte de vedere cu privire la raporturile dintre coloniștii germani și populația autohtonă românească în spațiul carpato-danubian în Evul Mediu timpuriu," *SRDI*, vol. XXVI, no. 6 (1973), pp. 1189–1190; Emil Lăzărescu, "Despre piatra de mormânt a comitelui Laurențiu și câteva probleme arheologice și istorice în legătură cu ea," *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, vol. IV, no. 1–2 (1957), p. 125; Răzvan Theodorescu, *Bizanț, Balcani, Occident la începuturile culturii medievale românești (sec. X–XIV)* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 281.

<sup>171</sup> Răușescu, *Cămpulung*, p. 6; Pavel Binder, "Din nou despre "comes Laurentius de Longo Campo," *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei*, series *Artă plastică*, vol. XXII, no. 1 (1975), pp. 186–187.

<sup>172</sup> Stoica Nicolaescu, "De la întemeierea Țării Românești. Inscripție de pe mormântul lui Comes Laurentius de Longo Campo, 1300," *Noua Revistă Bisericească* (Bucharest) vol. VI, no. 7–8 (1924), p. 165.

<sup>173</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. I, p. 122; Nicolae Lupu, *Cetatea Sibiului*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1968), p. 7.



this point is his burial in the church of St Jacob, the main Catholic church in town.<sup>174</sup> It was in Serbia as well that the *comes* was certified in Saxon mining communities, where he was elected by the inhabitants or appointed among them. This character also features in Ottoman sources, where he presided over the miners' assembly or ruled an administrative unit.<sup>175</sup>

The town community in Câmpulung was granted a privilege, the only one in Wallachia to have been kept in a complete form until today. In 1747, at prince Nicolae Mavrocordat's behest, all the documents of the town that still existed were gathered and copied on a scroll that ran for several meters in length: *Pânza oraşului Câmpulung* (39 documents).<sup>176</sup> The first document preserved was issued by Mircea the Shepherd in 1559 and contains the acknowledgement of a tax exemption granted to the townspeople. However, the most exhaustive are the 17th century acknowledgements, especially those granted by Matei Basarab.<sup>177</sup> Not only do they mention the provisions in the privilege ("the old custom", the "town establishment"), but also the predecessors that granted or acknowledged it: Radu Negru (1291/1292); Mircea the Old and Mihail I (1391/1392), Vlad the Dragon (1438/1439) and Vladislav II (1451/1452). Since all rulers, from Mircea on, have certainly existed, we have no reason to doubt the existence of their acknowledgements. The identification of the act passed by Radu Negru sparked controversy. The year 1291/1292 (6800 in Byzantine calendar style) is related to the date the country was founded in the town's chronicles. *Istoria Ţării Româneşti* (also called the *Letopiseţul Cantacuzinesc*) ascribes "the foundation of the town" of Câmpulung to Radu Negru,<sup>178</sup> while in *Istoriile domnilor Ţării Româneşti*, Radu Negru had only taken residence briefly in this town.<sup>179</sup> Those doubting the real existence of Radu Negru believe that said year had been later added to the privilege, to create consistency with the historical tradition.<sup>180</sup> However, 6800 (1291/1292) does not coincide with 6798 (1290), the

<sup>174</sup> Binder, "Din nou despre," pp. 187–188; Lăzărescu, "Despre piatra de mormânt," pp. 125–126.

<sup>175</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, II, pp. 117–118.

<sup>176</sup> Răuţescu, *Câmpulung*, p. 32.

<sup>177</sup> Răuţescu, *Câmpulung*, p. 12, 361; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; XXV, p. 262, doc. 250 și p. 468, doc. 424.

<sup>178</sup> *Istoria Ţării Româneşti*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>179</sup> *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> Stoicescu, "Descălecat sau întemeiere?", pp. 141–159.

year when Radu Negru arrived, as stated by the same chronicles. The document is certain to have existed. In mid 18th century, according to *Cronica franciscanilor*, a document from Margaret, Radu's wife, was still held by Catholics in the town.<sup>181</sup> If such a document existed, we see no reason for Radu's privilege not to be preserved, at least until the 16th or the 17th centuries. In all 17th acknowledgements, several phrases that link the first few days of the town to the dawn of the country are present: "in existence ever since the country was founded"; "ever since the town was founded"; "for the town establishment"; "as their agreement was, by the customs of old". The Latin seal of Câmpulung shows that the first to reap the benefits of this privilege were the Saxon settlers. Despite the scarcity of sources at hand, we are inclined to lend credence to the theory of the first privilege granted by this ruler.

A look into the provisions of this privilege, with two main components, legal and financial, is called for. The legal component stated that:

and their trials are so that no one is to mingle with them, but all *the law and their judicature are as their covenant earlier, by the custom of old, in the days of those old rulers.*

This guaranteed that the trial was only held in town, by a law separate from that of the country. The inhabitants had the right to full control over the town and its domain: "only the townsfolk are to use as they see fit these places, as domain in town, or house or parcel in the field or vineyard." *Prădalica* (the local version of the *Jus Spolii*) did not apply in town or on its domain. If any townsman was to die without inheritors, his share was transferred to the town. If he died in debt, creditors were forced to sell only to townspeople. This situation is unique for towns in Wallachia. Where taxes were concerned, exemptions were granted, such as those related to the grain duty, work for the ruler, the market duty, or the bread duty in the annual fair held in town. Tax exemptions granted by the ruling authority were completed by exemptions from the vineyard taxes of the townspeople.<sup>182</sup>

The situation in Câmpulung has its counterpart in the Saxons of Transylvania. The *Andreanum*, a document granted to the Saxons in 1224 (by King Andrew II), stated specifically that:

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<sup>181</sup> Georgescu, "Cronica franciscanilor," p. 339.

<sup>182</sup> DRH, B, XXV, p. 469, doc. 425.

none of our noblemen should ever dare to claim any village or parcel from the royal Majesty. And if one were ever to ask of him, they [the Saxons] are to protest by way of the liberty I have so granted them.<sup>183</sup>

Therefore, noblemen were not entitled to domain on Saxon land. An acknowledgement to Câmpulung, in 1636, stated that: “no boyar and no subject of mine are to ask of me the places or domain of these townsfolk, no house, no land in town, no ford for a mill, no parcel in field, no vineyard, nothing whatsoever, but let the townsfolk employ these domains as they see fit.” Except for townspeople, no other category was entitled to them, neither the prince, nor the boyars. There are legal similarities as well. If we were to analyze the privilege of the largest town in Hungary, Buda, we would notice similarities with Câmpulung as well: the townspeople of Buda could freely elect representatives with legal and administrative powers; their right over land in town was protected, the estates of those without heirs being transferred to the community and not to the king; they were exempted from customs duties in the country, except the *tricesima* and taxes for the local church; the keeper of the royal palace, the envoys and the retinue could not be hosted in town and did not attend trials; when wars broke out, townspeople were supposed to provide the king with soldiers.<sup>184</sup> Closer to Câmpulung, Braşov had its older privileges confirmed in 1353 by King Louis: the right of the community to elect a judge (*judex*) and a “commissioner” (*prolocutor*) with legal powers, the right to use forests, waters and fishing grounds (“the boundary”); in exchange, they paid the king 150 silver marks each year and supplied him with men-at-arms.<sup>185</sup> Sibiu had been granted similar rights.<sup>186</sup> It was in the main towns of Transylvania as well that the belongings of a deceased citizen without heirs were taken by the town, and not the monarch.<sup>187</sup> All proportions kept, we might identify similarities between these privileges and the one received by the townspeople of Câmpulung: legal rights and full control over the domain of the town etc. Based on these arguments, we believe that the Câmpulung privilege was granted in strict

<sup>183</sup> DIR, veacul XI, XII, XIII, C, I, p. 210, doc. 157.

<sup>184</sup> Birnbaum, “Buda,” pp. 139–142.

<sup>185</sup> DRH, C, X, p. 194, doc. 181.

<sup>186</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. III, p. 170.

<sup>187</sup> Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, p. 83.

relation to the settling of Saxon “guests” arriving from the kingdom of Hungary in the latter half of the 13th century.

The Transylvanian model served as a model for the first Wallachian ruler, Radu Negru, who granted or acknowledged these rights. Chronicles recorded this event as “the making of the town,” a phrase which found its way into other records as well. A comparison of these chronicles does highlight minor differences. *Istoria Țării Românești* claims that voivode Radu Negru:

First built the town called Câmpul Lung. And in it, made a grand and beautiful and high church. From there, they went the way of Argeș and again built a large town and therein laid his seat, with stone enclosures and royal houses and a large and beautiful church.<sup>188</sup>

The version set in *Istoriile domnilor Țării Românești* is somewhat different:

So did Radu vodă stay a while in Câmpul-Lung, wherein he built a large and wondrous church. He thence came to Argeș, *wherein a princely seat was built*, and a church that lasted until our time.” The same ruler “set himself to fashion and dispose his country as with counties, judges, and others such as were to good use for the ruler [...].<sup>189</sup>

Neither chronicle notes Radu Negru as the founder of a residence in Câmpulung, but only in Argeș, where the first princely seat in Wallachia existed. We must then discard, once and for all, the notion that the evolution of princely residences began with Câmpulung, a notion that still exists in Romanian historiography. This is not noted by the chronicles. “The making of towns”, as noted in *Istoria Țării Românești*, must not be ascribed to their foundation as settlements, since they probably already existed. The “making” is more of a formal creation, the autonomy of the community settled there being officially acknowledged.

The rights they were granted allowed settlers to organize colonies as they pleased. Their methods usually were later adopted in the internal layout of other Wallachian towns. Proof to this is the vocabulary in use in the town’s institutions, which was borrowed from the communities

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<sup>188</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2.

<sup>189</sup> *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 5.

of the newcomers.<sup>190</sup> The ruler of the town was a *județ*.<sup>191</sup> This designation has its roots in the Latin *Judex* and is the counterpart of the German *Richter*, indicating the right to judge, that set this ruler apart from other community members. The *județ* in Wallachian towns was matched by the *șoltuz* in Moldavia and the *Judex/Richter* in Transylvania (before the 15th century), since they had similar tasks.<sup>192</sup> He was assisted by a council of 12, called *pârgari*.<sup>193</sup> Their name comes from the German *Bürger*, and, to be more specific, *die Geschworenen Bürger* (Lat. *cives jurati*). In Romanian, their name was introduced by the adoption of the Saxon *purger*.<sup>194</sup> They are also designated by a cognate in Serbian towns: the *purgari*, their office being brought along by Saxon miners here.<sup>195</sup> The representative of rulers in towns was a *pârcălab*,<sup>196</sup> a term derived from the Hungarian *porkolab*,<sup>197</sup> which was based on the German *Burggraf*.<sup>198</sup> All these elements serve to argue that “German law” was brought south of the Carpathians by German settlers.

Above, we have theorized that Laurentius, *comes* of Câmpulung, had been assimilated with a *graf* from Transylvania. In Hungary, persons such as the *comes* or the *graf* were the ones to guide the Saxon “guests”, as part of the *locatio* process, whereby they laid the foundations for new settlements in the kingdom. They dealt with plotting and distributing parcels of land to each family of settlers, becoming headmen and judges of the community, organized by “German law”.<sup>199</sup> We see no reason for an evolution that was different here than that of Saxons residing in Câmpulung. By crosschecking information on the presence of the *graf* or the *comes* around 1300 and that of “guests” in 1369, we

<sup>190</sup> See also Hugo Weczerka, “Die Stellung der Rumänischen Stadt des Mittelalters im Europäischen Städtewesen,” in *Die Mittelalterliche Städtebildung*, p. 245; Valentin Georgescu, “Le régime de la propriété dans les viles roumaines et leur organisation administrative aux XVII<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles—Valachie et Moldavie,” *SB*, vol. 3 (1970), pp. 70–71.

<sup>191</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 70, doc. 32.

<sup>192</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia Moldovei și Țării Românești,” in *DIR, Introducere*, vol. II, p. 441.

<sup>193</sup> Ioan Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Țara Ungurească în secolele XV–XVI*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1905), p. 251, doc. CCXI.

<sup>194</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VIII, part 3, pp. 720–721.

<sup>195</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 162.

<sup>196</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46; B, I, p. 223, doc. 131; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 357, doc. CCCXII.

<sup>197</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VIII, part 3, pp. 717–718.

<sup>198</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 294.

<sup>199</sup> Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, pp. 163–165, 216–220; *A History of Hungary*, p. 49.

can gather a fragment of a process that took a not entirely dissimilar course than that in Transylvania. The passage of German settlers south of the Carpathians was accepted or demanded by the king, and then by the first rulers of Wallachia. Newcomers were headed by a *graf* who, based on his experience in Transylvania, outlined the community, dividing the land grant into plots along an older local settlement. As it often happened that those bringing in new settlers also became leaders of the new community, we may rightfully assume that the Laurentius in 1300 was probably either the one behind the arrival of Saxons, or related to the one directing it. An argument for a *locatio* in Câmpulung, as well as in other towns of the country, is topography. In each of their destination settlements, colonists received a parcel of land, in some, even one previously occupied by the local population (as was the case in Târgoviște). In all cases, the land granted to them was relatively central, close to the seat of the ruler. Recent comparative research revealed resemblances between the outline of some towns in Wallachia (Câmpulung, Pitești, and probably Târgoviște), and that of towns founded by colonists in Central Europe. The town outline revolved around a market, long and towered over by a church (in Câmpulung, St Jacob). The residence of the prince was nearby (as in Argeș, Târgoviște, probably Câmpulung or Pitești as well).<sup>200</sup> The fact that colonists were located close to this residence also suggests approval and support from the prince. Being both foreigners and Catholic, the settlers were first of all endowed with religious freedom, the churches they built being proof of this. Secondly, as skilled craftsmen and merchants, they also received tax exemptions, trade liberties, as well as the right to use a seal (e.g. the Latin seal in Câmpulung). The “guest” community naturally wished to organize itself based on its customs, requesting and receiving the right to judge as well, based on a law of its own. These were the conditions that led to a gradual transformation of the institution of *graf* into that of the *județ* during the 14th century, in Câmpulung and possibly in other urban centres as well. It was completed by a town council made up of *pârgari*. In one of the few documents written in German kept in Câmpulung, the ruler of the town is termed a *Richter*. The presence of this variant shows that, in 1524, when the document was drafted, townspeople no longer used

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<sup>200</sup> Gheorghiu, Radoslav, “Spațiul central,” pp. 153–173; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 219, doc. 230.

the name *graf* to refer to their leader, but that of *judet*. The transformation was complete, since the document written in German could use the term *Graf*.<sup>201</sup> The town autonomy was complete. A similar process occurred in Transylvania, where the *graf* gradually lost influence and was replaced by a *judex*.

Along with the *graf*, there are other traces of how “guests” arriving from Transylvania were organized. In two texts documenting Târgoviște, the *birău* and the *folnog* feature, who were ordered not to interfere in a donation made by the prince.<sup>202</sup> Their names are Hungarian in origin, being derived from *biró*, and *falnagy* respectively, that designated the village mayor and the judge.<sup>203</sup> Initially, the *graf* in Transylvanian Saxon communities was joined by a secondary character, the *falnagy* (Lat. *villicus*, Germ. *Hann*). Both the *graf* and the *falnagy* were subject to the authority of royal officials in the area. Even though the *graf* was replaced by a *judex*, the latter would still be accompanied by the *falnagy*.<sup>204</sup> The fact that the *biró* and the *falnagy* only appear in relation to Târgoviște leads us to believe they only represented a local office, related to the organization of the community of settlers in that town. It is likely they were the ones managing the “guests” in Târgoviște on behalf of the lord, one with administrative, the other with legal duties. We do not know whether they were appointed by the ruler or by the community. In the first document that mentions him, the *biró* stands alongside the *vornici*, *pristavi* and the *falnagy* or “any other servant of mine”, so they were probably considered representatives of the lord ever since that time. We cannot assimilate them with the town *judet* since he is noted in a separate document along with *biró*. In Moldavia, Hungarians in towns referred to their leader as *biró*.<sup>205</sup> The salt mine *biró* is also noted here, as leader of the Hungarian workers in salt mines in the county of Bacău, settling litigation between workers.<sup>206</sup> Based on the current findings, we cannot make any other assumptions as to the office of the *biró* and the *falnagy* in Târgoviște, except for their administrative and legal functions. The same documents include the

<sup>201</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 277, doc. 503; N. Iorga, *Scrisori de negustori* (Bucharest, 1925), p. 7, doc. VII.

<sup>202</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 83, doc. 39; p. 102, doc. 52.

<sup>203</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom I, part I, p. 566; tom II, part 1, p. 41.

<sup>204</sup> Binder, “Din nou despre,” pp. 186–187.

<sup>205</sup> Al. Rosetti, *Scrisori românești din Arhivele Bistriței (1592–1638)* (Bucharest, 1944), p. 32, doc. 5.

<sup>206</sup> DRH, A, XXIII, p. 155, doc. 117; *Instituții feudale*, p. 44.

*pristavi*, also originating in Transylvania, where they communicated orders in towns and carried out court orders. In Wallachia, their role was that of reporting the decisions of the prince in public places.<sup>207</sup> Another trace left by Catholic communities is the *viglu* duty imposed on townspeople.<sup>208</sup> Its name comes from the Latin *vigilia*, which initially designated the night spent by monks in prayer or in wake over the dead.<sup>209</sup> In towns, *vigilia* referred to the watch kept over the town at night. As the number of Saxons and Hungarians decreased in towns, some of the institutions they introduced changed their names, but not their content as well. The term *viglu* was replaced by *paza* or *straja*.<sup>210</sup>

With several features that set it apart from Transylvania, the *locatio* displayed two major aspects in the old towns of Wallachia (at least in Câmpulung):

1. topographically, represented by the imposition of a certain plan to settlements where colonists arrived;
2. legally, the granting of rights, according to “German law”.

The role of the Saxon “guests” was considerable, since they are among the first to have created privileged communities in Wallachia. Later, the rights they received served as a model and were introduced in the organization of other, newer towns. In the 15th–16th centuries, similar privileges, but not as vast, were also granted to other communities in the process of urbanization. However, we cannot say for sure that they included settlers coming from Transylvania. The ruling authority was interested in expanding this system, since it sought to develop the country and ensure large and safer income.

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The emergence of towns in Wallachia has its array of specifics, both in its timeline, its geography and its politics. The country was split into

<sup>207</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 416, doc. 256; *Instituții feudale*, p. 384.

<sup>208</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39.

<sup>209</sup> J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*, ed. C. Van de Kieft (Leiden, 1976), pp. 1100–1101.

<sup>210</sup> N. Stoicescu, “Despre organizarea pazei hotarelor în Țara Românească în sec. XV–XVII,” *SMIM*, vol. IV (1960), p. 193; *Instituții feudale*, p. 501.



two distinct areas, one with the main residence of the prince (Muntenia), and the other with a certain degree of autonomy (Oltenia), which also bore upon the development of towns. Along with Câmpulung, the oldest towns in the country are in Muntenia, at the foot of the mountain, where the political core and the seat of power for the first princes existed. As their power expanded towards the Danube, the more important settlements conquered by them became towns, receiving privileges, like the older centres did.

In the beginning of the 14th century, the main seat of Wallachia was in Argeş. In 1330, when the conflict with King Charles Robert erupted, the palace in Argeş was set on fire and prince Basarab I took temporary residence at Câmpulung.<sup>211</sup> After remaining the only ruler (1352), his son, Nicolae Alexandru moved back to Argeş. From 1359, the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Wallachia (1359) had its seat here. A group of privileged Saxons set themselves up near the palace. Sources only mention them after they began leaving the country in the 17th century. We know they built a Catholic church, replaced nowadays by an Orthodox church.<sup>212</sup> In Argeş, a Catholic bishopric was established in 1381.<sup>213</sup>

We have more information on Târgovişte, where Mihail I resided around 1400, as son and co-ruler of Mircea the Old.<sup>214</sup> This location was picked by no accident, since a small stronghold existed here, dating back to at least the 14th century.<sup>215</sup> The medieval town grew out of two nuclei: an older local settlement, and a newer one, created by colonists. The first was south-west of the stronghold, the inhabitants being grouped around the churches of St Nicholas-Geartoglu and Stelea Veche. Saxon settlers arriving from Transylvania settled north-west of the stronghold, where they built a church, Saint Mary. *Cronica*

<sup>211</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 293; Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeş*, pp. 143–147.

<sup>212</sup> Pavel Chihaiia, *Artă medievală*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1998), pp. 151–160; Virgil Drăghiceanu, “Curtea domnească din Argeş. Note istorice și arheologice,” *BCMI*, vol. X–XVI (1917–1923), p. 12; Victor Brătulescu, *Curtea de Argeş* (Bucharest, 1941), p. 26.

<sup>213</sup> Pascu, *Contribuții documentare*, p. 66; C. Auner, “Episcopia catolică a Argeşului,” *RC*, vol. III (1914), p. 439.

<sup>214</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 30; DRH, B, I, p. 31, doc. 12; p. 37, doc. 15; p. 86, doc. 42.

<sup>215</sup> Constantinescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” pp. 71–78; Petru Diaconescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” p. 67; Tereza Sinigalia, *Arhitectura civilă de zid din Țara Românească în secolele XIV–XVIII* (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 68–72.

*mănăstirii franciscanilor* dates the church to 1300, under Radu Negru's reign, when other Catholic churches in the country were supposedly built.<sup>216</sup> The modern topography of the town changed, because the economic centre was relocated on several locations. From the 16th century on, the Catholic quarter gradually depopulated, and the plot structure shifted, to the point where we can't say for sure nowadays whether the Saxon process of settlement has the features of a *locatio*. We can only assume this, since the Saxons were allotted a land previously inhabited by the local population, which retreated in the southwest point.<sup>217</sup> A similar situation can be found in Baia, in Moldavia, where settlers delineated plots of land again, and changed the outline of the settlement they occupied.<sup>218</sup> Their Transylvanian experience allowed Saxons coming to Târgoviște to manage a new settlement and they probably traced new plots, on one side and the other of the future *Ulița Mare*, which became the main street of the town. The first market of the town developed between their quarter and the stronghold, and the St Mary church was built nearby.<sup>219</sup> The rather early mention of the town *județ* support the existence of a distinctive treatment for the settler community. Until 1400, this treatment extended to other inhabitants as well.

Another town where sources certify a Saxon and Hungarian community is Râmnic. Sources are in a shape as poor as ever here. The modern topography of the town underwent changes, and no significant archaeological research was undertaken. Whereas we have definite information that princely residences existed in Argeș and Târgoviște, we can only assume this to have been the case in Râmnic. Several documents issued by rulers here were kept, but the location of the residence remains unknown to this day.<sup>220</sup> Settlers arriving here erected a church (unlocated either). In the 14th–15th centuries, they were part of

<sup>216</sup> *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor din Târgoviște*, in B. P. Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică a României*, tom I, part II (Bucharest, 1865), p. 51; Chihaiia, *Artă medievală*, p. 290.

<sup>217</sup> *Atlas istoric al orașelor din România*, series B, *Țara Românească*, fasc. 1, *Târgoviște. Städtelgeschichtesatlas Rumäniens*, Reihe B, *Walachei*, 1. *Târgoviște*, ed. Gh. I. Cantacuzino (Bucharest, 2006), p. II, VII, map V.

<sup>218</sup> Eugenia Neamțu, Vasile Neamțu, Stela Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia în secolele XIV–XVII*, vol. 1 (Iași, 1980), p. 22, 156; vol. 2 (Iași, 1984), p. 16, 42; Vasile Neamțu, *Istoria orașului medieval Baia (Civitas Moldaviensis)* (Iași, 1997), pp. 153–154.

<sup>219</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. IV, pp. 320–321; V, p. 215; Cristian Moisesescu, "Originea și structura urbană a orașului Târgoviște," *RMMMIA*, vol. XLII (1973), p. 14.

<sup>220</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10; p. 332, doc. 206; IV, pp. 175–176, doc. 141–143; V, p. 99, doc. 91.

a vast community, a good number of German and Hungarian names being recorded in the first documents of the town.<sup>221</sup> Râmnic is also the first settlement called *varoș* in the internal documents of Wallachia (1389).<sup>222</sup>

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The beginnings of most other towns in the country are just as little known. When compared to Moldavia, the trade privileges granted by Wallachian rulers are less generous in details regarding towns. Documents of this sort usually refer to the presence of princely customs, some located in towns. Privileges in Wallachia only mention the main ones, in Câmpulung, Târgoviște, Târgșor, Slatina and Brăila. The relevance of these documents is limited. Even though Argeș was the country's capital in the 14th century, no customs duty is mentioned in this area. The only sequence of towns noted in a document issued by the ruler is in a confirmation of commercial privileges that merchants in Wallachia had on the Brașov market. The document was issued somewhere after the 30th of January, 1431, by Dan II and includes: Câmpulung, Argeș, Târgoviște, Târgșor, Gherghița, Brăila, Buzău and Floci. The document also has the phrase “the other *târș*,” hinting at the existence of other settlements that had trade as their chief activity. The names of three customs were added, which had *târș* developed near them and had not reached town status: Rucăr, Săcuieni and the Dâmbovița stronghold.<sup>223</sup> The privilege only includes the names of settlements with commercial purpose in Muntenia, no town in Oltenia being present. The reason for this omission is unclear and must be linked back to Oltenia's special status, where many local *târș* belonged to boyars of high standing, and not to the prince.

Some of the above-mentioned towns had reached urban status recently. Pitești stands out, since the prince did not have full control over the town. One part of it remained property of a boyar, a fact revealed only in 1528, when Radu of Afumați donated to a monas-

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<sup>221</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 112, doc. 57; p. 158, doc. 91; p. 316, doc. 196.

<sup>222</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

<sup>223</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

tery half of the “village” of Pitești, including half of the customs.<sup>224</sup> It is likely that one of the 14th century rulers bought or seized only part of it from the first owner of the domain, the one with a *târg* on it. By granting privileges and attracting colonists, the *târg* was transformed into a town. The ones arriving in Pitești came from Transylvania, since the ceramics discovered here show similarities with that north of the mountains.<sup>225</sup> Their church, if it ever existed, still remains to be located, and the Catholic missionaries who crossed Wallachia after 1580 do not make any mention to them, probably because they had run away or had been assimilated. What is certain is that, around 1380, the town had not completed the steps towards the urban stage.<sup>226</sup> Several travellers in the area at that time call it *Nuwestad* or *Nieuwemere*, the “new town” or the “new marketplace”.<sup>227</sup> Târgșor was also among the “new towns” at the end of the 14th century. Under the name of *Novo Foro*, it features as a customs point in a privilege granted to inhabitants of Brașov by Ștefan, voivode of Transylvania (1412).<sup>228</sup> Its location on a trade route from Brașov to Brăila, as well as the residence built here probably in Mircea the Old’s reign or the reign of one of his predecessors contributed to the development of a *târg*.<sup>229</sup> More noteworthy is the closeness in names between Târgșor and neighbouring Târgoviște. In Romanian, Târgșor means “small *târg*.” The *-iște* suffix in Târgoviște shows that an older *târg* existed in its stead, so Târgșor is the new, smaller town, and Târgoviște is the older, larger one.<sup>230</sup> Gherghița displays a similar evolution, being located in place that favoured trade, at the crossroads of routes travelling to Târgoviște, Brașov, Buzău, Floci and Bucharest. The *târg* developed even more after the prince built a residence here. Beyond Gherghița, one day’s trip away on the road to Brăila, the town of Buzău developed, and from here on to Moldavia, another one day’s trip, the town of Râmnicul Sărat. In all these towns, no information regarding the presence of groups of settlers exists.

<sup>224</sup> DRH, B, III, pp. 85–87, doc. 51–52; p. 90, doc. 55; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 293, doc. 273.

<sup>225</sup> Rosetti, “Observații arheologice,” p. 69.

<sup>226</sup> DRH, B, p. 25, doc. 9.

<sup>227</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 19–20, 22, 24.

<sup>228</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 192, doc. 118; p. 199, doc. 121; p. 228, doc. 141.

<sup>229</sup> George Potra, N. Simache, *Contribuții la istoricul orașelor Ploiești și Târgșor (1632–1857)* (N.p., N.d.), p. 399, doc. 64.

<sup>230</sup> G. Pascu, *Sufixele românești* (Bucharest, 1916), pp. 250–252.

Bucharest, capital-to-be of the country, is also a “new town.” Although in a flat area, its surroundings (Ilfov-Vlașca) had experienced significant demographic density in the 13th–15th centuries. The vast forests here, as well as the southern marshes drove away migratory peoples from this area. In one of the many villages here, a regular trading post that supplied nearby settlements appeared after 1300.<sup>231</sup> Several roads crossed here, linking the Danube to towns in the area at the foot of the mountains.<sup>232</sup> The existence of a stronghold in the Bucharest area is archaeologically certified ever since the end of the 14th century. The impulse which spurred the development of a town was the construction of a new stronghold by Vlad the Impaler,<sup>233</sup> as well as the temporary setting of the main princely seat starting with Radu the Handsome’s reign.<sup>234</sup> The completion of the passage to the urban stage takes place by the granting of a privilege during Mircea the Shepherd’s reign.

Not all 14th century Wallachian towns evolved along the same lines. Danubian towns took a different course, in that we have no information about any princely residences being built. By Danubian towns we specifically mean the eastern towns, Brăila and Floci. The other Danubian port, Giurgiu, was conquered early by the Ottomans (1417) and developed as a town in the limits set by the empire. The same with Severin, temporarily under Wallachian control (until 1419), being more under Hungarian control; in 1524, it was laid to waste by the Ottomans.<sup>235</sup> On both sides of the river Danube fords, several twin settlements emerged: Brăila-Măcin, Floci-Hârșova, Giurgiu-Ruse, Zimnicea-Svishtov, Turnu-Nikopol, Calafat-Vidin etc. Their position, in places that allowed the river to be easily crossed, led to the early development of trading posts here. Ever since the oldest times, the Danube was a commercial venue, with merchants and navigators using this route contributing in the urbanization of many settlements along the river. The Genoese set themselves up at the mouths of the Danube, in Kilia and Vicina, a choice which can only be explained by the fact that the river was a safe enough method of transporting goods from

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<sup>231</sup> No less than 41 villages have been identified on the present-day area of Bucharest (Donat, “Așezările omenеști,” p. 83).

<sup>232</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 276, doc. 175.

<sup>233</sup> Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 320, doc. CCLXI.

<sup>234</sup> DRH, B, I, pp. XXXV–XXXVI; Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 123, doc. 98.

<sup>235</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 210–212, doc. 129–130.

Italy or the Levant. By a 1379 document, King Louis of Hungary allowed the Genovese to bring their goods “on the course of the Danube and on land, travelling from Orșova to Timișoara.”<sup>236</sup> Despite this being an only late source, it confirms the presence of Genovese ships on the Danube.<sup>237</sup> Italian navigators travelled the river down to Orșova, where goods were transferred to land. They stopped here because this was the gateway to the kingdom of Hungary and since the Danube straits could not be crossed without any hazard at all. Ever since the beginning of the 14th century, several portolans presenting the coasts of the Black Sea, as well as landlocked areas and the Danube course are kept. On the latter, harbours such as Vicina, Vidin and *Drinago* (probably Brăila in Wallachia), feature ever since 1325/1330.<sup>238</sup> The Italians were joined on the Danube by merchants from Transylvania as well. In 1358, King Louis ensured the inhabitants of Brașov that they can travel freely south of the Carpathians through land between the rivers of Buzău and Prahova and the mouths of Ialomița and Siret into the Danube.<sup>239</sup> Ten years later, the “Brăila road” (*via Braylan*) and the Brăila customs are certified in a privilege granted by Vladislav I to Brașov.<sup>240</sup> In 1396, Johann Schiltberger mentions the port of Brăila as the place where numerous ships “carrying goods from the land of the heathen” docked.<sup>241</sup> These records show that, until 1400, the settlement here had attained urban status. After Brăila was given over to the Ottomans, in 1538–1540, the town of Floci remained the largest Danubian port in Wallachia.

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Towns in Oltenia do not fall into any of the above categories. Except for Râmnic, probably built before the foundation of the country, with

<sup>236</sup> DIR, XIV, C, IV, p. 486, doc. 702.

<sup>237</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, “The Genoese and the Lower Danube in the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries,” *The Journal of European Economic History* (Roma) vol. V, no. 3 (1976), pp. 598–600.

<sup>238</sup> Laurențiu Rădvan, “Contribuții la problema identificării portului medieval Drinago,” in *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, eds. Ionel Căndea, Paul Cernovodeanu, Gheorghe Lazăr (Brăila, 2003), pp. 75–85.

<sup>239</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39; Pavel Binder, “Drumurile și plaiurile Țării Bârsei,” *SAI*, vol. XIV (1969), pp. 211–212; Iosipescu, “Drumuri comerciale,” p. 275.

<sup>240</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>241</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 30.

Saxon settlers involved as well, texts do not record any developed urban life west of the Olt until 1500. An insight into 14th–15th century sources reveals all future towns in Oltenia to be mere villages or *târgs*, supplying their surroundings. Only the end of the 16th century will bring about their official town status, under the auspices of the ruling authority. For towns such as Craiova, a major role was played by economic conditions determined by Wallachia's reorientation towards the Ottoman area, specifically an increase in trade with goods sought on the Eastern market such as cattle.

Târgul Jiului is mentioned during the reign of Dan II.<sup>242</sup> As with Pitești, modern historians had trouble explaining the status of the town, since documents deliver conflicting information. Its location and domain enter the texts as properties of grand boyars at times, and as property of the prince at others. In fact, sources indicate a real situation, since the settlement had two different owners. In the 15th century, one part of it was under the authority of the influential Buzescu family,<sup>243</sup> the other being from 1512–1521 a settlement of free people. After being accused of treason, Mircea the Shepherd seized the Buzescu domain and granted a privilege to the inhabitants residing there. Following acknowledgement by the prince, the settlement became a town.<sup>244</sup>

Further south, Craiova was initially a domain of another prominent local family, the Craiovescus.<sup>245</sup> They had an official residence here, which would later become a centre for the *banat* of Craiova. The *târg* here temporarily came under the control of the prince after Neagoe Basarab, member of the family noted above, rose to power. Despite having been initially donated to other boyars,<sup>246</sup> it returns among the properties of the prince under Mircea the Shepherd and its town status is acknowledged.<sup>247</sup>

The only Wallachian mining town is Ocna Mare, where salt mining is the main pursuit. It probably became a town from the 15th century

<sup>242</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 124, doc. 64.

<sup>243</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 248, doc. 205–206.

<sup>244</sup> DIR, XVI, B, VI, p. 22, doc. 26; XVII, B, I, p. 132, doc. 137; Alexandru Ștefulescu, *Istoria Târgu-Jiului* (Târgu Jiu, 1906), p. 20.

<sup>245</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 243, doc. 148.

<sup>246</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 196, doc. 123; IV, p. 195, doc. 159.

<sup>247</sup> Filitti, "Banii și caimacamii," p. 206; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 56, doc. 57; p. 405, doc. 420.

on,<sup>248</sup> but we believe that a trading post existed here ever since the previous century.<sup>249</sup> Its development was hindered by the proximity of Râmnic, only several kilometres away.

If we were to apply the legal definition of towns in Oltenia, we would find no such settlement around 1500. The only exception is Râmnic, on Muntenia's border, which had close connections with Argeş, Câmpulung or Piteşti. Its features make Râmnic akin to these three and not to the future towns of Oltenia. Until 1550, all towns-to-be in Oltenia were still *târgs*, on domains belonging to grand boyars or monasteries. Some of them would never become towns; we will approach them further on. Official documents see these settlements as simple villages, since the prince acknowledged town status only for those under his property. Their situation could be changed only if their domains fell under the domain of the prince (by seizure, purchase, trade etc.), as was the case with Târgul Jiului and Craiova. The situation above is explained by the special position that Oltenia had in Wallachia. The causes are revealed in the process of emergence for the country south of the Carpathians. Local states existing here before 1290 were dependent on the kingdom of Hungary and probably the Bulgarian Empire, the Mongol influence being more limited than in Muntenia. After 1290, the region came under the control of the ruler in Muntenia, who allowed a certain autonomy for it. 1359 is the year when the Metropolitan Church is created, located in Argeş, the capital. Boyars in Oltenia insisted on having religious autonomy as well, so the ruler compromised and acquiesced to the creation of Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Severin as well, for the western parts of the country (1370).<sup>250</sup> The *banats* lived on as unique forms of organization in Oltenia. They were administrative structures following a Hungarian model (see the Croatia or the Severin *ban*, for instance). Later on, they coalesced into a single *banat*, centred in Craiova. The one acting as great *ban*, an office which becomes subordinated to the ruling power, had significant power, including that of passing death sentences. His office was first under the control of the Craiovescu family, owners of

<sup>248</sup> DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 99, doc. 103.

<sup>249</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 62, doc. 27; II, p. 41, doc. 14.

<sup>250</sup> DH, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 1, doc. 3; DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 22, doc. 15; p. 25, doc. 19; *Izvoarele istoriei României (Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae)*, vol. IV (Bucharest, 1982), p. 209, 253–265; Emil Vîrtosu, *Titulatura domnilor și asocierea la domnie în Țara Românească și Moldova până în sec. al XVI-lea* (Bucharest, 1960), pp. 154–165; Ștefan Ștefănescu, *Bănia în Țara Românească* (Bucharest, 1965), pp. 60–71.



a large domain in Oltenia. The autonomy of the area was gradually eliminated by the central authority during the 16th century.<sup>251</sup> After around 1530, the prince intervened and seized the domains of boyars accused of treasons, taking over the *târgs* and allowing them to develop in a newer, freer environment. The new centres were acknowledged as towns, and could promote their own institutions. The ruling authority acted accordingly, seeking to consolidate its authority in the area west of the Olt. Towns were not only income-producing venues, but also the focus of princely power in the area.

*Main residences of the prince*

Although medieval monarchies were more or less peripatetic in nature, the ruler preferred a main residence, and generally focused on settlements favoured by the landscape, with a strategic location. Due to the specifics of Oltenia, all the residences preferred by rulers were in Muntenia. Most would be found in towns. Over a certain period, Romanian historiography mistakenly asserted that the first Wallachia residence had been in Câmpulung, based on vague chronicle data. We pointed above that not even the 17th century *Istoriî* do not convey this, although they only later integrated the information provided by historical tradition. The first rulers of the country liked the older residence in Argeş better, whereas Câmpulung was only host to Nicolae Alexandru, while he was a co-ruler. Due to the expansion of Wallachia south and east, the Argeş residence fell outside the scope of authority, being too close to the mountains and Transylvania and too far from the Danube. Ever since the beginning of the 15th century, the ruler preferred a residence closer to the centre of the country. Târgovişte seemed to fit this demand. From here on, links with all the areas of the state were provided for, the town boasting an excellent position when it came to administration as well. This was compounded by economic reasons, Târgovişte being situated on the most significant trade route in the country. The relocation here was indirect and rather lengthy. Mihail I resided in Târgovişte, whereas Dan II preferred Argeş. Ever

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<sup>251</sup> Unfortunately, no complete study that would focus on the autonomy of Oltenia prior to 1600 exists. *Bănia în Ţara Românească* by Ştefan Ştefănescu, as well as the *Domeniul Craioveştilor* chapter in *Domeniul domnesc* by Ion Donat, only partly fill in this gap.

since Alexandru Aldea (1431–1436), most rulers (Vlad the Dragon, Vladislav II and Vlad the Impaler) preferred Târgoviște, few documents being issued in other official residences. In 1458, Vlad the Impaler used the old grounds of a stronghold to build a new one in Bucharest, further south. It provided defence and overlooked the road coming from the port of Giurgiu, occupied by the Turks.<sup>252</sup> The first ruler who chooses to live here is Radu the Handsome, Vlad's successor to the throne, for political reasons (from 1465 on).<sup>253</sup> Being elected by the Ottomans, Radu sought proximity to his allies, who he could rely upon if necessary.

During the 16th century, rulers focused either on Bucharest, or on Târgoviște, as dictated by their political orientation. The pro-Ottoman or pro-Christian choice were not the only factors to contribute to the usual vacillation between these two residences. Economic aspects, as well as matters of a more personal order played their part in the evolution of formal residences (ruler preference, palace comfort). During this period, rulers visited other residences as well, presiding over trials, visiting monasteries or surveying the military operations in the area. The Târgoviște residence was used by some rulers as a summertime retreat, whereas Bucharest was the frequent winter refuge. Târgoviște had the upper hand over Bucharest, due to its central location, having the same position that Iași had in Moldavia. The Ottoman political influence favoured the Bucharest residence, which becomes sole capital after mid 17th century.<sup>254</sup> The rulers took periodic visits to other residences as well, such as those in Gherghița or Târgșor.

### *The târgs*

One category of settlements was neglected in Romanian historiography: the local *târgs*. Since most of them never attained towns status in the Middle Ages, they did not hold much appeal for researchers. As was the case in all of Europe, these places were under the control of the prince, the church, or the boyars in Wallachia as well. When some of the *târgs* dependent on the ruler presented sufficient conditions

<sup>252</sup> Ioan Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 320, doc. CCLXI.

<sup>253</sup> DRH, B, I p. 219, doc. 128.

<sup>254</sup> *Istoria politică și geografică a Țării Românești de la cea mai veche a sa întemeiere până la anul 1774*, ed. G. Sion (Bucharest, 1863), p. 177.

for the development of a permanent community, and some prospective income existed for the ruler, they received privileges and became towns. Regardless of who controlled them, the identification of *târgs* is very difficult, since they do not feature in sources, and where they do, they are seen as rural settlements. The criteria for identification are hard to attain. In Upper Austria, every settlement that had a market and more than one street was considered a small town (*Markt*).<sup>255</sup> As shown before, in Hungary, one criterion was the size of churches or the presence of mendicant monasteries.<sup>256</sup> When it comes to Wallachia, we know close to nothing about the communities living there, their occupations, the churches they built etc. We may assume that they were mainly agricultural, the lord of the settlement allowing some inhabitants to trade or practice crafts, in exchange for some fees. Some *târgs* are mentioned in travellers' journals, being recorded as stop-overs or ford crossings on the major rivers. Some are located halfway between two towns, when the journey took more than a day. Others feature under this incidental name when their legal status is indicated. We also believe that *târgs* existed where some of the grand boyars had houses. The information is more generous when they became towns.

One *târg* was further south, in Cornăţel, near the Danube. As a boyar-dependant village, it is noted in 1492 and 1526. In 1538, it is designated as a *târg*.<sup>257</sup> Ever since 1500, its inhabitants come bringing their goods to the Braşov market.<sup>258</sup> The development of a local market here was favoured by its location near the lakes at the mouths of the Mostiştea, abundant with fish. Nearby, the Coconi settlement began developing, and its destruction, at the turn of the 15th century, created the conditions to build Cornăţel.<sup>259</sup> As a town, it developed after Mircea the Shepherd's rule.<sup>260</sup> One part of its domain continued to remain under the control of some boyars.<sup>261</sup> Another *târg* was held

<sup>255</sup> W. Katzinger, "Die Märkte Oberösterreichs. Eine Studie zu ihren Anfängen im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert," in *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Städten und Märkte Österreichs*, vol. I (Linz, 1978), pp. 98–99.

<sup>256</sup> Fügedi, "La formation des villes," pp. 966–987; Kubinyi, "Urbanization," pp. 103–149.

<sup>257</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 374, doc. 234; III, p. 28, doc. 18; IV, p. 76, doc. 59.

<sup>258</sup> Grigore Tocilescu, *534 documente istorice slavo-române din Ţara Românească şi Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul (1346–1603)* (Bucharest, 1931), p. 235, doc. 245.

<sup>259</sup> Nicolae Constantinescu, *Coconi. Un sat din Câmpia Română în epoca lui Mircea cel Bătrân. Studiu arheologic şi istoric* (Bucharest, 1972), pp. 74, 149.

<sup>260</sup> DRH, VII, p. 351, doc. 257.

<sup>261</sup> DRH, B, VIII, p. 351, doc. 224; Constantin C. Giurescu, "Un vechi oraş al Ţării Româneşti: Cornăţelul," *SAI*, vol. II (1957), pp. 107–108.

in Săcuieni. Its inhabitants were included among the merchants of the country that Dan II was addressing in a privilege.<sup>262</sup> In Wallachia, there is even a county by this name and it is assumed that its centre was here, with even a customs house set up in the same location. The place where this *târg* was located has not been accurately identified yet. We would place it along the road leading to Braşov, along the Teleajen river valley, in Bucov or Văleni,<sup>263</sup> more certainly in the latter settlement, where a customs house later functioned.<sup>264</sup> Another *târg* was in Ruşi. When describing their journey, pilgrims Peter Sparnau and Ulrich von Tennstädt (1385) mention a stop-over at *Russenart*, between Svishtov and *Nuwestad* (the last one identified as Piteşti).<sup>265</sup> This was where several roads converged: the one leading from Piteşti to Zimnicea-Svishtov, near the Danube, as well as a road towards Craiova.<sup>266</sup> The inhabitants of Ruşi brought goods in Transylvania, in Braşov.<sup>267</sup> In the 16th century, documents record it as a simple village, property of a boyar. It would only become a town in the modern age.<sup>268</sup> One *târg* is mentioned in Soci as well, in 1471, during the battles waged by Ştefan the Great against Radu the Handsome. *Letopiseşul anonim al Moldovei* discusses the conflict raging between the two armies at Soci, and the outcome, favourable for Ştefan.<sup>269</sup> *Cronica moldo-germană* relates the same episode with one minor detail added, but a significant one for our purposes: “and then entered voivode Ştefan in Muntenia and waged battle against voivode Radu on that same day, near a *târg* called Soci.”<sup>270</sup> Despite several attempts at placing Soci in various locations in Moldavia,<sup>271</sup> we believe that the old chronicles are not wrong to claim that Soci were in Wallachia, on a river close to the Moldavian boundary. A village by this name also features in a 1760 document and in an 1835 map of Wallachia on the river Putna, near the present-day river

<sup>262</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>263</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 309; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Probleme controversate în istoriografia română* (Bucharest, 1977), pp. 155–156; Binder, “Drumurile și plaiurile,” p. 211.

<sup>264</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 480, doc. 423.

<sup>265</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 19.

<sup>266</sup> DRH, B, II, pp. 208–211, doc. 105.

<sup>267</sup> Radu Manolescu, *Comerţul Țării Româneşti și Moldovei cu Braşovul (secolele XIV–XVI)* (Bucharest, 1965), pp. 260–278.

<sup>268</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 14, doc. 11.

<sup>269</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 17.

<sup>270</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 30, 179.

<sup>271</sup> Mihai Costăchescu, *Arderea Târgului Floci și a Ialomiței în 1470. Un fapt necunoscut din luptele lui Ștefan cel Mare cu muntenii* (Iași, 1935), pp. 79–80.

mouth.<sup>272</sup> Soci had developed in a boundary area, where roads that followed the rivers of Râmnicul Sărat, Putna and Siret intersected, not far from where the stronghold of Crăciuna was erected.<sup>273</sup> On the other bank of the Siret lay a small town, Olteni, which was initially reliant on Wallachia, the same as the town of Putna. Both, Olteni and Putna, were later transferred to Moldavia.<sup>274</sup> The name Soci comes from the Hungarian *szucz*, “maker of sheepskin coats,” and hints at a possible influence from across the mountains (colonists?).<sup>275</sup> It fell into decay at the turn of the 16th century, possibly because of the conflicts between Moldavia and Wallachia.

Sources mention a customs house and a stronghold in Dâmbovița (*cetatea Dâmboviței*), whose location is also subject to debate. The stronghold is first mentioned in 1368, when Dragomir, castellan of Dâmbovița (*comes Dragmer Olachus castellanus ejus de Domloyka*) fights the voivode of Transylvania in the mountains.<sup>276</sup> In the winter between 1396 and 1397, Vlad the Usurper is besieged in the stronghold of Dâmbovița by another voivode of Transylvania.<sup>277</sup> Mention is often made of the Dâmbovița stronghold and customs in privileges granted to Brașov by the Wallachian rulers.<sup>278</sup> Possible locations are Bucharest and the stronghold in Cetățeni, the first, in the flatlands, the other at the foothills, on the upper reaches of the Dâmbovița river.<sup>279</sup> The latter version is more plausible.<sup>280</sup> A list of customs included in the privi-

<sup>272</sup> C. Constantinescu-Mircești, Ion Dragomirescu, “Contribuții cu privire la cunoașterea hotarului dintre Moldova și Țara Românească de la întemeierea Principatelor și până la unire,” *SAI*, vol. VI (1964), pp. 78–81; C. C. Giurescu, *Principatele române la începutul secolului XIX. Constatări istorice, economice și statistice pe temeiul hărții ruse din 1835* (Bucharest, 1957), p. 262.

<sup>273</sup> C. Cihodaru, “Cu privire la localizarea unor evenimente din istoria Moldovei: Hindău, Direptate, Crăciuna și Roșcani,” *AIIAI*, vol. XIX (1982), pp. 630–631; Constantin C. Giurescu, “Despre lupta de la Soci,” *SMIM*, vol. IV (1960), pp. 424–425.

<sup>274</sup> C. C. Giurescu, “Oltenii și Basarabia,” *RIR*, vol. X (1940), pp. 130–140.

<sup>275</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 65.

<sup>276</sup> *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, part I, ed. J. G. Schwandtner (Tyrnau, 1765), pp. 311–312; Al. A. Vasilescu, “Cetatea Dâmbovița,” *BCMI*, vol. XXXVIII (1945), p. 29.

<sup>277</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 160, doc. 101.

<sup>278</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 198, doc. 120.

<sup>279</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, pp. 56–57, doc. 96, 98; *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 17; N. Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic al monumentelor feudale din București* (Bucharest, 1961), p. 23; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1979), pp. 47–48.

<sup>280</sup> Vasilescu, “Cetatea Dâmbovița,” pp. 25–38; Dan Berindei, *Orașul București, reședință și capitală a Țării Românești (1462–1862)* (Bucharest, 1963), p. 14; Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Cetatea București în veacul al XV-lea,” *MIM*, vol. I (1964), pp. 142–143; Gh. I. Cantacuzino, *Cetăți medievale din Țara Românească în secolele XIII–XVI*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 166–170; Chihaiia, *Artă medievală*, pp. 266–274.

leges observes the geographical location, the stronghold of Dâmbovița being located in the vicinity of mountains.<sup>281</sup> Archaeological research in Cetățeni highlighted the existence of a medieval settlement near a stronghold (popularly referred to as “Negru Vodă’s stronghold”).<sup>282</sup> Within it, traces of surface or semiburied dwellings were found, along with workshops, local or imported ceramic, indicating that a *târg* existed here as well. The place where the settlement was located has to this day kept the name *Poiana Târgului*.<sup>283</sup> Near the base of the stronghold, in the south-eastern part of the settlement, the remains of three contiguous stone churches were found, dating from the 13th to the 18th century.<sup>284</sup> The age of the churches shows that the settlement dated back to at least the 13th century, as a political and economic centre. It never evolved into a town, being too close to the more important centre of Câmpulung. Ultimately, a small *târg* existed near Câmpulung as well, in Rucăr, where the border roads led to Brașov. The presence of merchants here, from Săcuieni and the Dâmbovița stronghold in the privilege granted by Mircea the Old to merchants of the country shows that their inhabitants were considered subjects of the lord, but their settlements were not advanced enough to be considered towns and receive privileges.<sup>285</sup> This is the state they will be in all through the Middle Ages. Other several small *târgs* feature as villages in internal documents, even though part of the inhabitants dealt with trade. We will find them in Brașov or in Sibiu, where they are recorded as coming or taking merchandise. These *târgs* are: Albești, Câmpina, Florești, Nămăești, StONEȘTI, Căineni, Mușetești etc.<sup>286</sup>

In Oltenia, the number of *târgs* was high, most being controlled by the boyars. Of all these, only Târgul Jiului and Craiova will become towns until mid 16th century. Close to Târgul Jiului, Târgul Gilort was completely within the bounds of a boyar’s domain. The marketplace that functioned here never became anything more than a

<sup>281</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 197, doc. 120; p. 218, doc. 134; p. 230, doc. 142; p. 276, doc. 175.

<sup>282</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 161.

<sup>283</sup> Lucian Chișescu, “Elemente definitorii ale centrului voivodal de la Cetățeni puse în lumină de cercetarea arheologică a anilor din urmă,” *CA*, vol. IX (1992), pp. 85–86.

<sup>284</sup> Chișescu, “Elemente definitorii,” pp. 86–87; Lucian Chișescu, Spiridon Cristoccea, Anișoara Sion, “Cercetările arheologice de la complexul monumentelor feudale de la Cetățeni, jud. Argeș,” *MCA* (Bucharest, 1986), pp. 275–281.

<sup>285</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>286</sup> Radu Manolescu, “Relațiile comerciale ale Țării Românești cu Sibiul la începutul veacului al XVI-lea,” *Analele Universității București, seria Științe Sociale—Istorie*, vol. V (1956), p. 257; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–267.

regular exchange post.<sup>287</sup> A similar settlement existed in Motru, where a county existed only to disappear later (the same as with Gilort). Caracal was near Craiova, and was under the control of the Craiovescus.<sup>288</sup> It becomes a town after 1600, after the domain is purchased by Mihai the Brave.<sup>289</sup> The *târg* of Strehaia is located between Craiova and Severin, owned by the Craiovescus as well,<sup>290</sup> where chronicles places the second centre of the Metropolitan Church of Severin.<sup>291</sup> Another *târg* was in Calafat, at a crossing over the Danube. The *târg* here initially belonged to the ruler, but was later donated to the monastery at Tismana.<sup>292</sup>

The *târg* near Tismana is a more distinctive case. What makes it so unusual is its recording as an *oraş* in 1491 and 1535, even though it depended on the monastery.<sup>293</sup> The phrase “under the stronghold”, in a 1493 document regarding the monastery, leads us to believe that the word *oraş* has to do with the original meaning of the term, that of “suburbs”, a function that the settlement here had in relation to the fortified monastery.<sup>294</sup> This was where the *ban* of Tismana resided in the 15th century.<sup>295</sup> Even so, all documents issued by the chancellery of the prince in the 16th century approach Tismana as a village.<sup>296</sup> The *târg* present here survived up to the next century, being the only one near a monastery known before 1600.<sup>297</sup>

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For Wallachia, we have identified two main lines along which towns were formed:

<sup>287</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 498, doc. 441; II, p. 200, doc. 187.

<sup>288</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 91, doc. 69.

<sup>289</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 360, doc. 271; XXI, p. 334, doc. 191.

<sup>290</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 405, doc. 420.

<sup>291</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 1; Ștefănescu, *Bănia*, pp. 60–71.

<sup>292</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 278, doc. 172; II, p. 426, doc. 224.

<sup>293</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 365, doc. 228; III, p. 313, doc. 188.

<sup>294</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 386, doc. 240.

<sup>295</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 335, doc. 228; Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 63, doc. 55.

<sup>296</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 241, doc. 199; see also p. 267, doc. 225; V, p. 42, doc. 41; VII, p. 3, doc. 2.

<sup>297</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 196.

1. evolving out of commercial suburbs, located near the residences of knezes, voivodes or princes;
2. towns developed directly out of *târgs* situated on the valleys of internal rivers, on the Danube or at crossroads.

A mixture of political and economic factors, complemented by the social and legal ones, triggered the urbanization. In the case of the oldest towns, a decisive part was played by colonists arriving from Transylvania, who brought along new institutions. The transition from pre-urban settlement to town, before 1300, was not one in which the knezes and the voivodes took a direct and aware part. This stage in the process of urban development was one of organic, gradual growth.<sup>298</sup> After 1300, the prince, as a central sole institution, intervened in the organization of towns, acknowledging their status and granting them privileges, which allowed them to develop economically. Unlike Central and Western Europe, in Wallachia, the Church did not have a significant part in the urban emergence. The local boyars had small *târgs*, but, as long as they were privately owned, they could not ascend to town status. They could only be marked officially as towns after coming under the control of the ruler.

The urban terminology used makes it obvious that most words are borrowed from abroad, be they German, Hungarian, or Slavonic. The absence of Latinates can be explained by the fact that Romanian-inhabited land did not have any urban life after it was abandoned by the Roman Empire. Towns did not exist for several centuries, and the first communities with an urban tradition to arrive here and introduce new terms, as well as a new organization were foreign. Constantin C. Giurescu believes foreigners only brought in the terms, with the institutions predating them.<sup>299</sup> However, he does accept that there are too many similarities between structures south of the Carpathians and those in Transylvania for us to discard the contribution that German settlers had in the urbanization.<sup>300</sup> Moldavia is not largely different: here, colonists had an even greater influence, confirming this theory. The fact that the political environment present in Transylvania and Hungary lacked here pushed the evolution of towns in Wallachia

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<sup>298</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, p. 91.

<sup>299</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 132.

<sup>300</sup> Panaitescu, "Comunele medievale," pp. 139–140.



or Moldavia in a different direction, without them reaching a more extended autonomy.

Some authors sought to argument the existence of a Byzantine influence in the development of towns in these areas.<sup>301</sup> The structures of monarchy in Wallachia were adopted following the Byzantine model via the Bulgarians and the Serbians, and attempts were made to bring similar arguments for towns as well. We might go as far as to claim that Wallachian rulers had followed the model of privilege-granting applied in some towns by Byzantine emperors at the end of the 13th century, keeping control by their own offices. The emperor confirmed tax exemptions for the inhabitants in Monemvasia (1284, 1316), and he granted legal privileges for those in Ioannina, with the right to elect their own representative (1319).<sup>302</sup> However, some discrepancies remain, which do not support the existence of Byzantine influence in the genesis of Wallachian towns. Towns existed in the contact area between the Romanian-inhabited area and that under Byzantine influence. These are the settlements on the Danube line, from Dinogeția, Capidava the Păcuilui lui Soare island etc. They acted as Byzantine administrative and economic centres until the end of the 12th century, and came under a series of different rulers, Bulgarian, Mongol, Byzantine again, and finally Ottoman. In this environment, many of these settlements decayed or evolved in a different setting and with a different organization, which left no enduring mark on the organization of town centres north of the Danube later on. What's more, rulers of Wallachia came into contact with the Danube area only later, mid 14th century, when the first towns in the country were already formed. Their development followed the opposite direction, from the Carpathians and Transylvania towards the Danube, and not from the Danube and neighbouring Bulgaria. The resources are just as blurry for Bulgaria as well: we cannot know whether the late privilege system in the Byzantine Empire applied, since we lack the documents to tell us so. Ultimately, an analysis of urban institutions and terminology in Wallachia and Moldavia confirms the lack of Byzantine influence.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Ștefan Olteanu, "Cercetări cu privire la geneza orașelor medievale din Țara Românească," *RDI*, vol. XVI, no. 6 (1963), pp. 1260–1267.

<sup>302</sup> Charanis, "Town and Country," pp. 135–136; Pljakov, "Le statut de la ville," pp. 82–86.

<sup>303</sup> Valentin Al. Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1980), p. 58.

The timeline sets urban emergence at a later date in Wallachia, if compared to Central Europe. This region is among the last to be urbanized after this process pervaded Poland and Hungary (Transylvania included) in the 13th century. After Wallachia, Moldavia ended the cycle of urban transformation in this area. This is an overview for how process of urban transition ended in Wallachia:

1. former half of the 14th century, for towns with colonists in Transylvania, Câmpulung, Argeș, Târgoviște and Râmnic;
2. in the 14th century, for Brăila;
3. the end of the 14th century, the beginning of the 15th, for Floci, Pitești, Târgșor, Gherghița, Buzău and Ocna Mare;
4. in the 15th century, for Râmnicul Sărat and Slatina;
5. in the 16th century, for Bucharest, Craiova, Târgul Jiului and Cornățel.

The privilege granted by Dan II to merchants proves very useful when creating this timeline. This resource is unique, in that it mentions in the former half of the 15th century the most important settlements where trading posts were located, wherefrom merchants bringing goods on the Brașov market departed: Câmpulung, Argeș, Târgoviște, Târgșor, Gherghița, Brăila, Buzău and Floci. Râmnic, Slatina and Pitești are absent, but they are however mentioned in other documents of the time.<sup>304</sup> More surprising is the fact that Wallachian towns do not feature among the 358 centres in the so-called “list of towns” (and strongholds) in Kiev, drafted in the later years of the 14th century.<sup>305</sup> The most plausible explanation for this is provided by Constantin C. Giurescu, specifically, a series of settlements based on regional lists.<sup>306</sup> The one drafting the list did not have one for Wallachia as well, otherwise we cannot explain why Argeș, Câmpulung or Brăila are not recorded, but the towns and strongholds in Moldavia, and Silistra, Kilia or Vicina are. The list is extremely useful for the study of Moldavia, on the other hand.

<sup>304</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 131, doc. 69.

<sup>305</sup> Alexandru Andronic, “Orașe moldovenești în secolul al XIV-lea în lumina celor mai vechi izvoare rusești,” *Romanoslavica*, Istorie series, vol. XI (1965), pp. 209–216 (French version: “Les villes de Moldavie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle à la lumière des sources les plus anciennes,” *RRH* 9, no. 5 (1970), pp. 837–853). Details on this list can be found in the discussion below, on the emergence of towns in Moldavia.

<sup>306</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 71–72.

We have identified 16 towns in Wallachia for the 14th–16th centuries, which coexisted with several local *târgs*. The urban network does not display the same density encountered in the rest of Europe. Towns developed here as well as commercial landmarks and stop-overs on the roads that crossed the country, but the average distance between settlements is relatively large, around 50–60 kms. The most urbanized region of the country was between the rivers Olt and Dâmbovița (at the foot of the Carpathians), whose name (Muntenia) later extended over the entire country east of Olt. In that region, the average distance between towns is of around 40 kms. Taking these figures into account, towns south of the mountains covered in a scope a large territory, on a radius of at least 20–30 kms. The more isolated or remote areas were supplied by *târgs*. The lowest density was in the southern and eastern parts of the country, where even fewer towns developed. After the great Mongol invasions of the 13th century, a calmer century followed, a transition state when the environment allowed towns to emerge in this area as well. From the 15th century on, the danger of attacks from the Ottomans controlling the southern part of the Danube only worsened the already failing demographics here. Several “urban gaps” can be noticed on the urban map:

1. in Muntenia, in the Wallachian Plain, between Brăila and Buzău, between Floci and Gherghița and between Bucharest and Slatina;
2. in Oltenia, in the hill area north of Craiova, between the rivers Jiu and Olt, but also between Jiu and the Danube.<sup>307</sup>

We do not rule out the existence of *târgs* here, away from the major roads and only involved in local trade. Written sources do not mention them, so they can only be identified archaeologically.

As for the distribution of towns over the landscape, we may note their “aligned” layout, at the border of geographic units, supplying areas with differing economic purposes. The first group of towns lie along the border of the mountains: Câmpulung, Argeș, Râmnic and Târgul Jiului. The next group falls in the border area between the wooded hills and the flatlands: Râmnicul Sărat, Buzău, Gherghița, Târgșor,

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<sup>307</sup> The poor demographics in the border areas of Wallachia is also noticed by foreigners: “The ruler of Wallachia [...] had a large and wide country with less people in some lands by its borders” (*Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 112).

Târgoviște, Pitești, Slatina and Craiova. Bucharest and Cornăețel were in the plains. The last group is made up of Danubian towns, Brăila and Floci, who were completed by Giurgiu, conquered by the Ottomans, and Severin, predominantly under Hungarian control. This distribution is related to the evolution of towns over time, since the oldest towns are the ones towered over by the mountains, where significant Transylvanian communities settled, whereas the new towns occupy the flatlands at the ruler's behest. Where this ruler extended his authority, towns emerged as well. The centres at the foot of the mountain were at the exit from the high area of roads that created links with trade centres in Transylvania (Brașov and Sibiu). Towns south of the mountains are counterparts for the ones up north, being the closest markets where they could sell their goods.

Romanian society was mainly rural, and towns gradually left their village ancestry behind by acquiring some fundamental features. They first of all had an economic purpose, being a market for the hinterland and maintaining trade relations with towns in the outer area. Townspeople derived an income mainly from trade; this was proven by the intense circulation of merchandise and coins as well. Crafts were only secondary, providing for the local needs. The second element, perhaps the most important when separating town and village in the Middle Ages, is the legal status. Wallachian towns had their own institutions, and they were not those of the village: the *județ* and the *pârgari* were leading actors in urban autonomy, which essentially offered freedom, the right to judge and that of owning land in town. Autonomy was guaranteed by a privilege, but was limited by the ruling powers, which collected taxes from townspeople and had representatives defending its interests. This was why urban centres also had an administrative purpose, most being county seats. Overburdened with taxes, the town communities in Wallachia never had the strength to erect stone walls for its defence. But despite all the differences, the town was closely connected to the rural environment. Every town had its domain, that some of the inhabitants could use for agriculture. Towns in Wallachia never shut themselves off from villages: urban economy could not act independently from rural economy, but only as its complement.

Going by the criteria that separate the rural environment and the urban one, as well as by the terminology, a pattern can be drawn for Wallachian towns. The legal status leads us to distinguish between towns that belonged to the prince and *târgs* on the domains of boyars or monasteries. Among the first, there are towns with an extended

autonomy (Câmpulung), and towns with a limited autonomy (the rest). Economically, towns were ordered across their level of trade and local production: large centres, such as Câmpulung, Târgoviște, Argeș, Târgșor, Gherghița, Buzău and Râmnic were heavily trading with Transylvanian towns across the mountains. Brăila and Floci, port-towns dealing with centres near the Black Sea and the Levant. Towns such as Slatina or Râmnicul Sărat only stood out by a local-level trade.<sup>308</sup> One single town developed out of mining operations, Ocna Mare, where salt was extracted. Going by their administrative function, we will encounter towns where official residences existed, as well as county seats (most of them), but also centres which did not fulfil any of this purpose (Ocna Mare and Gherghița). The religious purpose, although without any special role in the emergence process, has its importance in the evolution of some towns, due to the impact that institutions such as the Metropolitan Church (in Argeș, then Târgoviște and Bucharest) or the bishoprics (in Argeș, Râmnic and Buzău) had on urban life.

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<sup>308</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–304.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIAL, ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

#### *Administration, law, and relations with the ruler*

For the general public, the commune, defended by heavy enclosures and relying on a policy of its own, minting coins and supplying armies or fleets at sea, is the archetype of the medieval town. But this was an exception even in the Western world, since most urban settlements only enjoyed internal autonomy, and were still dependent on kings or princes.<sup>1</sup> The granting of liberties to towns in Western and Central Europe can by no means be applied to the rest of the continent, each area displaying its specifics. Towns in the Romanian Principalities had a certain autonomy, although to a lesser degree than their western counterparts. And this autonomy had the privilege as its bedrock, a “fragment of power”, a series of rights that the central authority relinquished by its own choosing in favour of other social categories.<sup>2</sup> The conditions where such transfers of rights occurred varied largely from one area to the next.

In the Romanian Principalities, as well as in Hungary, Poland, or Serbia, the monarch was the one regulating the rights of towns. In Romanian-inhabited territory, the monarchy followed a Byzantine pattern, claiming divine right and ultimate power over all other institutions. This was how the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia attempted, and to a certain extent succeeded, to assert supremacy over the other powers of the state. The centralization attempts, which entailed a well thought-out adjustment of the administrative and fiscal system, also directed the relations with communities that entered the urbanization stage.<sup>3</sup> For the oldest Wallachian towns, Argeş, Câmpulung, Râmnic and Târgovişte, the 14th century is also the century when their rights

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<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Hohenberg, Lynn Hollen Less, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Şerban Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 146–147.

<sup>3</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 143–148.

and obligations are finally set.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the first point of note on their timeline comes only after the first privileges were granted: in 1389, when the term *varoș* is first mentioned in internal documents.<sup>5</sup> The usage of this term in the chancellery is closely related not only to the assertion of the rights of the ruler (as conveyed by the phrase *varoș gospodstva mi*—“my princely town”), but also the existence of institutional autonomy in that settlement, confirmed by the central authority. Townspeople essentially had the following rights acknowledged: individual freedom, the right to be judged by their own rules, that of electing representatives, of fully owning land within the settlement bounds, of using the surrounding domain, of tax exemptions for certain taxes and customs duties. The right to hold a weekly market or a yearly fair was granted or acknowledged by the ruling authority as well. In Câmpulung’s case, the right to closed community existed as well: without popular consent, no foreigner could settle in town. Instead, the prince imposed its own representatives since the very beginning. They were responsible for those not belonging to the town community, monitored tax collection and also saw that the prince’s decisions were obeyed. The prince had a superior right over the town domain.<sup>6</sup> This privilege was captured in a document which was periodically acknowledged. The name under which these true urban charters feature in Wallachia is that of “town books.”<sup>7</sup> Except for Câmpulung, no charter was preserved in a complete form, but only as privilege fragments referring to the town domain or which include tax exemptions (Târgoviște, Gherghița, Pitești). The situation is similar in Serbia, where no charter with privileges granted to Saxon miners was kept, although other sources indicate their autonomy.<sup>8</sup> Towns lost many of their documents to the many battles of the Middle Ages, and especially in the seemingly endless streak of wars of the 18th century. And let us not forget fires, in no small number at the time, which also did their part. Monasteries were more mindful or preserving and passing documents to future generations.

In internal sources, the leader of the townspeople is referred to solely as the *județ*. Slavonic texts term him *sudeț*, Latin ones, *judex*, and

<sup>4</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144.

<sup>5</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor Codrescu, *Uricariul*, vol. XI (Iași, 1889), pp. 252–253.

<sup>7</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 389, doc. 350.

<sup>8</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 161.

German ones, *Richter*.<sup>9</sup> All these cases share the same meaning, that of “judge,” originating in his initial task, that of presiding over trials.<sup>10</sup> In Western and Central European towns, those called *judex*, *scultetus* or *advocatus* were originally representatives of the king or the seniors, sharing judgement on their behalf. Instead, the first institution of townsmen was the juror council, which was involved in the struggle for rights and control over the internal market. Following such disputes, townspeople were granted the right to choose their own *judex*. Jurors continued to weigh significantly in the balance of power, ensuring that the judge did not focus too much of it in his hands.<sup>11</sup> For Wallachia, neighbouring Transylvania was a genuine model for how towns emerged and privileges were granted. This is also why numerous features in towns north of the mountains are also present south of them.<sup>12</sup> Câmpulung suggests this type of development, where the *greav*, a preserve for the colonist group, turns into *judex*, specific for the town community. The latter was compounded by another institutional body for self-government, the town council, made up of *pârgari*.

Even though it had existed ever since the 14th century, the first *județ* is mentioned in the Târgoviște documents in 1424.<sup>13</sup> A few years later (around 1433–1437), the *pârgari* in the same town are mentioned as well.<sup>14</sup> In 1425, a certain Haneș *pârgar* is mentioned, but the text does not tell us his place of origin.<sup>15</sup> The *județ* and the 12 *pârgari* were elected on a yearly basis following an assembly. Each town had a specific date and place for the election ceremony. The only information preserved refers to the oldest Wallachian town, Câmpulung. In an 1855 monograph, C. D. Aricescu describes the election process for the leader of the townspeople.<sup>16</sup> He documented testimonies by the

<sup>9</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 277, doc. 503; Iorga, *Scrisori de negustori*, p. 7, doc. VII.

<sup>10</sup> In Latin medieval documents, the word *judex* has various meanings: state official, nobleman, *comes*, duke, a man with legal tasks, domain administrator, assessor etc. (Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis*, pp. 561–563).

<sup>11</sup> Fritz Rörig, *The Medieval Town*, ed. D. J. A. Matthew (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 23–24; Gieysztor, “From Forum to Civitas,” pp. 23–24; Zientara, “Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation,” pp. 76–77.

<sup>12</sup> Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 85–114.

<sup>13</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 102, doc. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 251, doc. CCXI.

<sup>15</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 112, doc. 57.

<sup>16</sup> C. D. Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului, prima residență a României*, part I (Bucharest, 1855); C. D. Aricescu, *Scrisori alese*, eds. Dan Simonescu, Petre Costinescu (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 335–361.



elder of the town, and this also ran in his family, since his father had been one of the last to hold the office of *județ*. The ceremony presented in Aricescu's monograph could not have been older than the 18th century, but it certainly preserved at least part of the medieval tradition, and therefore worthy of consideration. The town was divided into two factions that elected 12 *pârgari* according to their own size. These, in their turn, elected a representative for each faction. Until the 17th century included, the *județ* was alternatively elected one year among the Saxons, and another among the Romanians.<sup>17</sup> Over time, the Saxons were assimilated and lost their language, but kept their Catholic religion.<sup>18</sup> As a minority, in the 18th century, they could only influence the elections by expressing preference for one of those vying for power. The *județ* was chosen among the most honest and influential inhabitants, and, had he proven worthy of this title, he could be re-elected.<sup>19</sup> In Câmpulung, the date when the *județ* was chosen was Easter Tuesday. This would take place in "Negru Vodă's church" (the future Câmpulung monastery), where representatives of the two factions were largely accompanied by their supporters. The debates took place in the town marketplace, which kept until later days the name *Piața Județului*. The one elected by the *pârgari* then entered the church, where he was blessed and took an oath of faith in front of the altar. The ceremony ended when the new *județ* was presented to the townspeople and the feast began, with 12 pails of wine, one for each *pârgar*.<sup>20</sup> The *județ* was handed by the *pârgari* the symbols of his office: the seal, the old books and town registry, that he kept in his home or in the town church. Until the 18th century, the documents and the seal were in the Catholic Church of St Jacob the Great.<sup>21</sup> A similar ceremony must have existed in other Wallachian towns as well, each with its own traditions and customs. In Târgoviște, a late tradition noted the election of *pârgari* at the six town crossings, with two *pârgari* for every crossing; then, they elected the *județ*.<sup>22</sup> It appears this election

<sup>17</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VII, p. 452.

<sup>18</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 209.

<sup>19</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, p. 131; Dumitru I. Băjan, *Documente de la Arhivele Statului*, vol. I (1586–1840) (Câmpulung, 1929), p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, pp. 132–133.

<sup>21</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, p. 136; Virtosu, "Din sigilografia," pp. 486–487; N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. I–II (Bucharest, 1901), p. 292, doc. XLVII; Georgescu, "Cronica franciscanilor," p. 339; *Călători străini*, vol. VII, p. 460.

<sup>22</sup> Mircea B. Ionescu, *Târgoviște, schițe istorice și topografice* (Oradea, 1929), p. 41.

was indirect. Not all the inhabitants of the town were enfranchised, and only those considered members of the community could vote. They elected the *pârgari* so that each quarter could be represented, and later on, the *pârgari* were electing the *județ*. This election usually coincided with one great religious ceremony, usually that of the patron saint of the town. After the election, the main town representatives, the *pârgari*, the people and the priests of high standing, along with the new *județ*, sought acknowledgement from the prince.<sup>23</sup> This situation is not the exclusive province of Wallachia.<sup>24</sup> The legitimacy of the *județ* was two-fold: he was chosen by the community, and acknowledged by the prince.

The *județ* never issues any document by himself, and is always accompanied by the 12 *pârgari*. His jurisdiction only covered the town and its domain. Non-community members were under the authority of representatives for the prince, the so-called *pârcălabi* and *vornici*. The clergymen also depended on the higher religious authorities. As with Moldavia, most documents that the *județi* and the 12 *pârgari* left us confirm a sale or a purchase. Even though they issued documents in the most varied fields of urban life, only those having to do with property over movable goods or real estate were kept, due to their importance when the owner had to prove his rightful claim over some disputed good. Any change as to the possession of goods or land in town or on its domain first required the confirmation of the *județ*. Then, the prince was called upon to consent to this transfer.<sup>25</sup> The documents were drafted usually in the house of the *județ*, which was also his official residence.<sup>26</sup> As with a good number of towns in Moldavia and Serbia, there was no building specifically designed to house town representatives (the town hall, *Rathaus* in Central Europe).<sup>27</sup> The town hall is symbolically substituted by the town church, which held the privileges and the seal (Câmpulung).<sup>28</sup>

The most important component in the power of the *județ* was the legal one. Assisted by the *pârgari* or by select members of the community, he tried the causes in towns or the cases where the matter was

<sup>23</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VII, p. 452; Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> Marsina, "Pour l'histoire des villes," pp. 34–35.

<sup>25</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 81, doc. 61; DIR, XVI, V, p. 369, doc. 388; VI, p. 4, doc. 4.

<sup>26</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 130, doc. 130; p. 249, doc. 235.

<sup>27</sup> Ćirković, "Unfulfilled Autonomy," p. 168.

<sup>28</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 292, doc. XLVII.

related to the town in some way, and held lesser court. In some situations, the trial was also attended by the *pârcălab* or the bishop, but only in the final days of the Middle Ages, when the authority of the *județ* starts to wane.<sup>29</sup> Most matters brought before the court and noted by texts have to do with possession over building plots, stores, vineyards or land in town or the domain. The *județ* had the right to investigate and testify in causes judged directly by the ruler or by his officials. He could also charge and cash in fines (Rom. *globe*) for matters less significant, and communicated to the ruler trial matters, possibly those that exceeded his authority.<sup>30</sup>

Romanian historiography has an ample debate on the whether or not legal elements borrowed from the so-called “German law” were introduced in towns. Except for Nicolae Iorga, most historians did not back up this idea.<sup>31</sup> There are several arguments which support the at least partial introduction of such elements in Wallachian towns: the presence of German *hospites*; their taking up residence by a possible *locatio* in one of the oldest towns in the country; the privilege which granted them access to leadership of these towns; the German-based terminology of a large part of town institutions; the right to judge and full control over land in town. Unfortunately, documentary sources are scanty. If Moldavia is somewhat more generous in this respect, in Wallachia, data on the laws that governed the townspeople are almost completely lacking. Research into the privileges of Câmpulung can provide us with some insight. First of all, these documents mention the “old custom”, used in “their law and trial”.<sup>32</sup> The last phrase indicates that officials dispatched by the prince couldn’t interfere with the local trial, since there was a town “law” and a town “custom”. And, since there was a large Saxon community in Câmpulung, some elements of German law obviously found their way into this “law”. It is hard to tell whether these elements persisted until the 17th century and whether they were ever laid into writing. There are towns in Wallachia where no colonisation of any sort is certified. We assume that a “town cus-

<sup>29</sup> DIR, XVI, B, VI, p. 22, doc. 26; p. 32, doc. 40; DRH, B, XXI, p. 37, doc. 25.

<sup>30</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 73, doc. 76; XVII, B, IV, p. 349, doc. 354; DRH, B, XXIV, p. 360, doc. 269.

<sup>31</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, ed. Adrian Angheliescu (Bucharest, 1981), p. 115; N. Iorga, *Negoțul și meșteșugurile în trecutul românesc*, ed. Georgeta Penelea (Bucharest, 1982), p. 83; Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale,” pp. 137–138; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 169–170.

<sup>32</sup> DRH, B, XXV, p. 262, doc. 250.

tom” existed in them as well, combining common law with elements specific to urban life.

The *județ*, along with townspeople, divided the parcels of land on the town domain annually.<sup>33</sup> All those residing or owning houses in town had the right to use such lands.<sup>34</sup> The *județ* had the power to draw parcel boundaries in or outside town, and this even at the request of the ruler sometimes.<sup>35</sup> It was no rare occurrence for the *județ* to represent in person various townspeople tried. Most information detailing this concerns the safeguarding of the rights of inhabitants over the town domain. The townspeople of Argeș were engaged in a trial over part of their domain which lasted more than a century, since this share had been donated to the monastery of Argeș by its founder, Neagoe Basarab.<sup>36</sup> The same with the townspeople of Gherghița, who went to trial with a neighbouring village over part of the domain.<sup>37</sup> There are, however, situations when the townspeople attempted to gain ground at the expense of their neighbours. The *județ* and the *pârgari* in Râmnic made unsuccessful attempts at taking over the nearby Ulița village.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately, the *județ* and the *pârgari* intervened for townspeople in commercial disputes that they had with other townspeople, local or abroad. The archives of Brașov and Sibiu have numerous documents to certify the close ties that bound these towns to those in Wallachia. The leaders in Câmpulung, Argeș, Râmnic and Târgoviște, had a vast correspondence on trade matters with their Transylvanian counterparts. In several documents, the *județi* bear witness to the community member status of several persons. More interesting is a 1500 document issued by the *județ* and the *pârgari* in Argeș, that comes to confirm that a certain Gherghe, a previous inhabitant of Râmnic, had meanwhile become a member in their community. The document had been requested by the townspeople of Sibiu, who did not allow Gherghe to trade because there had been an outbreak of disease in Râmnic

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<sup>33</sup> DRH, B, XXV, p. 80, doc. 63; XXXII, p. 302, doc. 292; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 80.

<sup>34</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 335, doc. 175.

<sup>35</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 11, doc. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Trials presided by Radu of Afumați (DRH, B, II, p. 464, doc. 249 și III, p. 52, doc. 30), Pătrașcu the Good, Mircea the Shepherd (DRH, B, V, p. 145, doc. 131) or Petru the Young (DRH, B, V, p. 207, doc. 191 și p. 221, doc. 205); neither confirms the claim of the inhabitants of Argeș.

<sup>37</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 225, doc. 208.

<sup>38</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 52, doc. 39.

and they believed he had come from there.<sup>39</sup> It was around 1500 as well that the *județ* and the *pârgari* of Brăila confirmed a certain Mihoci Latinețul had resided in their town for five years.<sup>40</sup> We cannot tell whether those five years were the period required to be acknowledged as member of town community. It was probably less, maybe a year. Also, we are not aware of the conditions of acceptance for those coming from a different town.

The *județi* who enjoyed the confidence of the ruler were sent on diplomatic or economic duties.<sup>41</sup> They also represented the community in major international reunions. In 1415, German sources mention several delegations from Wallachia that attended the Council of Constance (1414–1418): *Langnaw* (Câmpulung), *Ergx* (Argeș), *Žurm* (Severin?) and *Newmarckt* (Pitești or Târgșor).<sup>42</sup> They were most likely representatives of the Catholic communities, who were joined by knight Tugomir (Dragomir?), an envoy of Mircea the Old.<sup>43</sup>

Sources of the time do not relay any specific information on the earnings of the *județ*. Apparently, they were entitled to part of the fines that they gave in trials or off taxes exacted for the issuance of property documents.<sup>44</sup> Most of those who gained this office had a high social and economic standing in the town, being involved in business with towns across the mountains.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the *județ* and the *pârgari* council, another role of note in town was that of “the good people,” also called “the good and elderly” (Old Slav. *dobri i stari liodi*).<sup>46</sup> Their importance increases from the 16th century on, as does the importance of priests, especially those in churches belonging to the authority.<sup>47</sup> In most cases, “the good people” only feature as witnesses in various transactions. Only in spe-

<sup>39</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Documente slavo-române din Sibiu (1470–1653)* (Bucharest, 1938), p. 19, doc. XI.

<sup>40</sup> Ioan Bogdan, *Documente și regeste privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Ungaria în secolele XV–XVI* (Bucharest, 1902), p. 236, doc. CCXXXVI.

<sup>41</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 304, doc. CCXLIX; Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 267, doc. LXXXI.

<sup>42</sup> Constantin I. Karadja, “Delegații din țara noastră la conciliul din Constanța (în Baden) în anul 1415,” *AARMSI IIIrd series*, vol. 7 (1926–1927), pp. 70–71, 82–83.

<sup>43</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” p. 63.

<sup>44</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, p. 282; Răuțescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, p. 142.

<sup>45</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 236, doc. CCXXV; p. 267, doc. LXXXI; Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” p. 98.

<sup>46</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, pp. 81–82, doc. LVI; p. 193, doc. CLIX; DRH, D, I, p. 351, doc. 255; B, IV, p. 118, doc. 90; V, p. 87, doc. 81.

<sup>47</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 275, doc. 289; p. 294, doc. 307; DRH, B, XI, p. 64, doc. 48; XXII, p. 494, doc. 261.

cial cases do records note them alongside the *județ* and the *pârgarii*, issuing documents.<sup>48</sup> Specific conditions in Wallachia (but in Moldavia as well) did not lend “the good people” an institutionalized form, but only a consultative nature. In cases of utmost importance, they accompanied the *județ* when representing the town in trials or when the ruler was asked to renew old rights. Among them were members of the so-called “urban patriciate”, the *meliores* of Latin documents, that also explains the name “great” assigned to them in several internal documents.<sup>49</sup>

Not too many data on “the good people,” the *județ*, and the *pârgari* attending the great assemblies in the country remain. Information about them is either way cursory at best. We assume that the representatives of townspeople were called upon as well. There is also no direct testimony to the existence of town assemblies. We may however state that assemblies directed at electing the *județ* and the *pârgari* fell in this category, along with those celebrating major moments in urban life. Terms such as “the people of the town” or “all the good and the elderly” refer to these reunions. An assembly of this kind must have been the one in 1597, when the townspeople of Târgoviște consented to transferring one part of the town domain to the Golgota monastery, following a donation by prince Pătrașcu the Good.<sup>50</sup>

Wallachian towns did not have an archive per se. Instead, they had a registry, called *catastif*, which held copies of various acts issued by the *județ* or various transactions completed in town. The town *județi* did not only present Slavonic documents to historical scrutiny. The written exchanges also include numerous letters sent to Transylvanian towns, with a good many of them being drafted in Latin or German. Knowledge of the languages of the time and the form needed for writing documents shows that a town chancellery existed in at least the 15th century, where permanent or temporary clerks worked. They specialized in writing municipal documents, reading out orders from the prince, reading out letters, noting the decisions of courts of law or maintaining the town records (Câmpulung, Râmnic, Buzău).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 291, doc. 266; XI, p. 354, doc. 268.

<sup>49</sup> Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” p. 92.

<sup>50</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 355, doc. 268; p. 357, doc. 269.

<sup>51</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 302, doc. 157; XI, p. 94, doc. 69; Radu Manolescu, “Cultura orășenească în Țara Românească în sec. XV–XVI,” *Analele Universității București, seria Istorie*, vol. XVIII, no. 2 (1969), pp. 38–39.

Towns were also entitled to a seal. Originally, this right belonged to the ruler, so the town community could only make use of it if he conceded to it.<sup>52</sup> This had been the case in neighbouring Hungary, where Saxons were granted the right to have a seal by the king. The *Andreanum*, issued in 1224, stated that: “I allowed them to have a single seal (*sigillum*), which would be distinctively known to us and to our noblemen.”<sup>53</sup> Similarly, when they acknowledged the representative town institutions, the Wallachian rulers also granted them the right to their own seal, a true symbol of autonomy. The seal, called a *pecete* in Romanian (Old Slav. *peciat*), belonged to the community, and not to the *județ*, who was only to use it as elect representative of this body.<sup>54</sup> As a private person, the *județ* had his own seal. By applying it, seals lent official form to documents issued by town authorities, being stamped on reinstatement acts, trial records, boundary acts, testimonies, documents issued for the prince, to other towns, etc.<sup>55</sup>

Seals were wax-stamped, preference being given to black, green, and white wax, and avoiding the red one,<sup>56</sup> so as not to confuse it with the princely seal.<sup>57</sup> From the 16th century on, seals are more often than not stamped in black ink or smoke on paper documents, a method especially seen in documents of no particular importance. As for their size, town seals were small and average, having around 3–4 centimetres, and had a round shape. The oldest town seals bear legendary emblems and include hagiographical references or are reminiscent of the pursuits of townspeople: a bird (Câmpulung); an eagle (Argeș); Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child (Târgoviște); Three Hierarchs or the Holy Trinity (?) (Râmnic); The Annunciation (Bucharest); a fish (Floci).<sup>58</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, “Despre dreptul de sigiliu,” *Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică*, vol. III (1960), pp. 338, 342–343; Dan Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta heraldică în România* (Bucharest, 1977), p. 183.

<sup>53</sup> DIR, veacul XI, XII și XIII, C, I, p. 209, doc. 157.

<sup>54</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” p. 333.

<sup>55</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 75, doc. 67; DH, vol. XV, partea 1, p. 309, doc. 568.

<sup>56</sup> D. Năstase, F. Marinescu, *Les actes roumains de Simopetra (Mont Athos). Catalogue sommaire* (Athens, 1987), p. 26, doc. 59; *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> Năstase, Marinescu, *Les actes roumains*, pp. 27–28, 31, 34, doc. 68–69, 74, 82, 104.

<sup>58</sup> Emil Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 482–501; Dan Cernovodeanu, Ioan N. Mănescu, “Noile steme ale județelor și municipiilor din Republica Socialistă România,” *RA*, vol. XXXVI, no. 1–2 (1974), pp. 8–11, 65–74 (French version: *Les nouvelles armoiries des districts et des villes de la République Socialiste de Roumanie*, *RA*, vol. 36, no. 1–2 (1974), pp. 121–218); Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea orașului,” *Magazin istoric*,

Dan Cernovodeanu identified two periods in the evolution of town seals:

1. the classic times, between the 14th and the 15th centuries, when the charges in town arms were influenced by the heraldry in the Central-European areas (in Câmpulung); seals of this period show mastery in crafting, their representations being correct, heraldry-wise;
2. modern times, beginning with the 16th century, when a slow decay in the technique used to craft seals but also in the compliance with the heraldic canon can be noticed; charges are placed directly in the field of the seal and are no more than simple emblems (in Argeș, for example).

Most towns had one single seal, apparently. When it wore out after prolonged use, it was replaced with a new one. Over time, new representations become awkward imitations of the old, hindering experts interested in unravelling the evolution of urban sigillography. Older municipal seals do not make reference to neither the name, nor the institution of the *județ* and the *pârgari*, and only note the name of the town they belonged to or a religious text.<sup>59</sup>

Seals of the oldest towns sparked the widest debates. In Câmpulung, the seal existed ever since the 14th century.<sup>60</sup> As with the seals of Baia and Roman in Moldavia, the text of the Câmpulung seal was drafted in Latin: *Si<gillum> + Campo + Longo*. The round shield is German and has a bird as its emblem.<sup>61</sup> A more significant detail is that the seal has been kept until 1713 in the Catholic church of the town, indicating that the seal originally belonged to the Saxon community.<sup>62</sup> Emil Țirtoșu believes there is a connection between the bird in the town seal and the similar emblem in the Wallachian seal (bird and cross). This has also been said about the seal of the town of Argeș, with an even more

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vol. XII, no. 2 (1978), pp. 35–38, 55; Maria Dogaru, *Din heraldica României* (Bucharest, 1994), pp. 66–67.

<sup>59</sup> Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta*, pp. 183–184; Cernovodeanu, Mănescu, “Noile steme,” pp. 8–9.

<sup>60</sup> Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 75, doc. 67; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 275, doc. VI.

<sup>61</sup> Țirtoșu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 483–491; Maria Dogaru, *Sigiliile, mărturii ale trecutului istoric. Album sigilografic* (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 162–163, fig. 149.

<sup>62</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, p. 136; Țirtoșu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 486–487; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 292, doc. XLVII; p. 293, doc. XLIX; Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 339; *Călători străini*, vol. VII, p. 460.



original representation, hinting at the Byzantine area: the two-headed eagle. The text on this seal is Slavonic and refers to a renewal of the seal, in the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th.<sup>63</sup> The text on the seal of the town of Târgoviște contains a phrase similar to that in Argeș, only this time the name of the ruler when the renewal was performed is given: Neagoe Basarab. It is likely that both seals were restored during his reign and by his command.<sup>64</sup>

Only few privileges in Wallachia have been kept, most in late copies. We have already approached the provisions and the conditions whereby the most extended and complete privilege, that of Câmpulung, had been issued. It left townspeople the right to be judged by their “custom,” so no official from the prince could intervene. Another provision unique to this town is the right of inhabitants to full possession over land not only inside the town, but also on its domain. The prince and the boyars could not own land here. If any townsman was to die without inheritors, his wealth was transferred to the town. A good share of the duties that other townspeople owed the prince is not recorded in Câmpulung, as well as the taxes levied for the sale or purchase of products in the town market. Only those residing here were allowed to sell wine.<sup>65</sup> The explanation for the Câmpulung autonomy is to be found in town emergence period. The privilege granted to colonists arriving in the latter half of the 13th century was largely inspired by other grants to Transylvanian Saxons.

The privileges preserved for other towns only concern tax exemptions or the domain. The townspeople of Târgoviște benefited from a privilege kept in a confirmation given by Dan II in the 1424–1431 period.<sup>66</sup> The community was exempted of all customs duties in the country, except for those in their own town. They were to pay their duties only on wax, 12 ducats for each unit of measurement, the same as the Brașov merchants did,<sup>67</sup> and for saffron, iron and wool, the duty was lessened, “as you paid in the days of the rulers of old.” The

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<sup>63</sup> Emil Vîrtosu and Maria Dogaru believe this seal to adapt an older representation, from Mircea the Old’s reign (Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 494–495; Dogaru, *Din heraldica*, p. 66), while Pavel Chihaiia claims the seal was restored under Neagoe Basarab (Pavel Chihaiia, *Din cetățile de scaun ale Țării Românești* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 99).

<sup>64</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 192, doc. 94; XI, p. 354, doc. 268; Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 310, doc. CLXXXVII.

<sup>65</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; XXV, p. 262, doc. 250 și p. 468, doc. 424.

<sup>66</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 109, doc. 55.

<sup>67</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121.

mention made to these “rulers of old” touches on another privilege, granted by a predecessor for Dan II, probably one of the princes in the latter half of the 14th century. Exemptions for Târgoviște are not as generous as those for Câmpulung, where townspeople were not burdened with taxed goods in their own town. The prince wished to keep a safe source of income in town, which had become the main seat of power in the country. Instead, townspeople were free to sell their goods around the country. The townspeople of Târgoviște were also granted a reduction in the donations for the wine they obtained from vineyards on the town domain, one of their main sources of income. A similar reduction was also granted to the townspeople of Pitești. No relevant documents have been kept to this day, but, the inscriptions on two crosses (one near Târgoviște, and one near Pitești), record the quota of wine that was to be donated by the inhabitants.<sup>68</sup>

Other privilege fragments concern Argeș, Gherghița and Târgșor. The community in Argeș collected part of the customs duty in the town marketplace, which was however transferred to a monastery near the town in the 16th century.<sup>69</sup> The ones in Gherghița and Târgșor demanded, in the 18th century, an exemption for the taxes collected off goods obtained on the town domain (the *dijma*). Unfortunately, no 14th–16th century source to confirm this release from taxes exists.<sup>70</sup>

Another feature of Wallachian towns is their institutional dualism. Authorities elected by the townspeople were joined by designated representatives of the prince. While the *județ* and the *pârgari* saw to ensuring compliance with the town autonomy, the prince’s representatives guaranteed that his authority was obeyed and duties were levied. This phenomenon is encountered, in various proportions, all over the European area. In Wallachian towns, the mainstay of the prince’s authority was the *pârcălab*, along with the *vornic*, in towns where residences of the prince existed. West of the Olt, the prince’s officials also heeded commands by the great *ban*.<sup>71</sup> There were several types of *pârcălabi*: town,

<sup>68</sup> Virgil Drăghiceanu, “O tocmeală a lui Matei Basarab,” *BCMI*, vol. IV (1911), p. 148 and vol. XIX (1926), p. 88; Radu Gioglovan, “O tocmeală a lui Matei Basarab privitoare la scutirea târgoviștenilor de unele dări pentru vin,” *SAI*, vol. IV (1962), pp. 45–47.

<sup>69</sup> I. Ionașcu, “Din relațiile mănăstirii Curtea de Argeș cu orașenii argeșeni,” *RIR*, vol. XIV, no. IV (1945), p. 459.

<sup>70</sup> Potra, Simache, *Contribuții*, p. 439, doc. 90; *Documente privind relațiile agrare în veacul al XVIII-lea*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1961), p. 735, doc. 584.

<sup>71</sup> *DIR*, XVI, B, VI, p. 25, doc. 29.

stronghold, village or residence *pârcălabi*, every one of them with their own jurisdiction. The stronghold *pârcălabi* had military command and would oversee trials and administration in strongholds and their land, whereas the village *pârcălabi* judged small matters in rural settlements.<sup>72</sup> The stronghold *pârcălabi* were the forebears of the ones in towns. In the 14th–15th centuries, Wallachia had strongholds in: Poenari, Giurgiu, Turnu, Dâmbovița, Bucharest, Teleajen. In 1417, Giurgiu and Turnu fell to the Ottomans, and, from the 16th century on, the rest were abandoned or lost their defensive purpose. The first mention of a *pârcălab* can be found in the Latin privilege granted by Vladislav I to the Brașov merchants (1368), where he is recorded as a *castellanus*.<sup>73</sup> In the same year, Dragomir, castellan of the Dâmbovița stronghold would wage battle against the armies of Nicholas Lackfy, voivode of Transylvania.<sup>74</sup> The origin of this office must be sought in the Western environment, and more specifically in the Hungarian one, since it was adapted in the administration south and east of the Carpathians from here.<sup>75</sup> The designation comes from the Hungarian *porkolab*, which, in its turn, was derived from the German *Burggraf*.<sup>76</sup> In the latter half of the 14th century, the office was introduced in towns as well.<sup>77</sup>

The town *pârcălabi* had legal, fiscal, administrative and probably military duties. His jurisdiction primarily covered those that did not fall within the scope of the *județ*: the serfs from the so-called “12 villages” (from the town hinterland), and people living in town but not part of the community (servants and Gypsy slaves). The *pârcălabi* gathered the customs duties for the prince off goods that passed through the settlement and those sold in the town marketplace.<sup>78</sup> The only townspeople we know exempted from the duty collected by the *pârcălabi* were those in Câmpulung (in their town) and Târgoviște (in other towns than their own).<sup>79</sup> The duty paid by the townspeople of Argeș had been

<sup>72</sup> *Instituții feudale*, pp. 360–361.

<sup>73</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>74</sup> *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, part I, pp. 311–312; Vasilescu, “Cetatea Dâmbovița,” p. 29.

<sup>75</sup> Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis*, p. 153.

<sup>76</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VIII, part 3, pp. 717–718; Antonius Bartal, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis regni Hungariae* (Lipsia, 1901), p. 86, 545; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 294; Georgescu, “Le régime de la propriété,” p. 73.

<sup>77</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 186, doc. 106.

<sup>78</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 186, doc. 106; p. 219, doc. 128; Șerban Papacostea, *Oltenia sub stăpânire austriacă (1718–1739)*, ed. Gheorghe Lazăr (Bucharest, 1998), pp. 108–110.

<sup>79</sup> Răuțescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, p. 361; DRH, B, I, p. 109, doc. 55.

transferred in the 16th century to the prior of the monastery nearby, who collected tax with his own *pârcălab*.<sup>80</sup> Tax exemption were also in force for some monasteries, such as Cozia and Nucet.<sup>81</sup> Along with the *judet*, the *pârcălab* handled disturbances. He had the power “to pursue for harlotry and theft, and to fine those guilty and to chastise them”; those with “great guilt unto themselves” were to be sent before the prince.<sup>82</sup>

Similar to the *pârcălab*, but of a different origin, was the *chefalia* of Silistra, a town south of the Danube. He is mentioned in 1404–1406 in a document in which Mircea the Old asked the *chefalia* of Silistra not to interfere with the ponds of the Cozia monastery at the mouth of the Ialomița river.<sup>83</sup> Mircea the Old ruled over Silistra for a short time, between 1388–1389 and 1417.<sup>84</sup> The office of the *chefalia* is definitely Byzantine in origin, the name meaning “chieftain” in Greek.<sup>85</sup> During the reign of the Palaeologus, the *chefalia*, along with the *prokathemenos*, was the most important representative for the emperor in towns of the empire. He had administrative, fiscal, and legal duties not only in towns, but also in the surrounding areas. He collected taxes and presided over matters related to the owning of land, daily life etc. In the 1319 charter, that Andronikos II granted the town of Ioannina, the urban court of law made up of “good people” chosen by the community, was presided over by a *chefalia*, who was usually appointed by the emperor among members of the royal family or local aristocracy.<sup>86</sup> This office was adopted in Serbia as well. Initially, a *kefalija* would sometimes be the military commander guarding over the boundary towns of Skopje and Scutari, seized from under Byzantium rule. During Stefan Dušan’s reign, officials bearing this designation are appointed leaders in every province of the Serbian state (Serb. *župa*).<sup>87</sup> Their residences were located in major towns, each with a small

<sup>80</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 49, doc. 34.

<sup>81</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 237, doc. 135.

<sup>82</sup> Dinu C. Giurescu, “Anatefterul. Condiția de porunci a visteriei lui Constantin Brâncoveanu,” *SMIM*, vol. V (1962), p. 366, doc. 1.

<sup>83</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 63, doc. 28.

<sup>84</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 257–258; Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Une victoire du voïvode Mircea l’Ancien sur les turcs devant Silistra (c. 1407–1408),” *Studia et Acta Orientalia* (Bucharest) vol. I (1957), pp. 242–243; DRH, B, I, p. 63, doc. 28; p. 70, doc. 32.

<sup>85</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 296; Georgescu, *Bizanțul*, p. 58, note. 91.

<sup>86</sup> Pfljakov, “Le statut de la ville,” pp. 75–79.

<sup>87</sup> Jireček, *La civilization serbe*, p. 8, 27–28.

district that covered the villages in the immediate vicinity (Serb. *metoh gradski*).<sup>88</sup> A probably identical situation existed in former Byzantine provinces that came under the rule of the Bulgarian empire, where Silistra's territory was also located. Like Moldavia, Wallachia became accustomed to acknowledged internal autonomy for newly conquered towns. Many Greeks lived in Silistra, who probably kept their Byzantine-influenced organization. It is to these town inhabitants that we owe the Greek inscription of 1407–1408, as recognition of the fact that Mircea had rid the town of the Ottoman threat.<sup>89</sup> The local office of *chefalia* was preserved, and Mircea the Old appointed one of his trusted familiars, who gained authority in the area around the town as well, including north of the Danube.<sup>90</sup> This office was not introduced in other towns as well, where the *pârcălabi* already existed.<sup>91</sup>

The second official sent by the prince in towns was the *vornic*. As his name suggests (Old Slav. *dvor* = “court”), he initially looked after the residence of the prince. In Wallachia, in the 14th–16th centuries, such residences are to be found in the following towns: Argeș, Târgoviște, Câmpulung, Bucharest, Pitești, Târgșor, Gherghița, Râmnic and Slatina. The residence of the great *ban* in Craiova can also be added to this list. The main residence of the prince was overseen by a great *vornic*, usually a boyar of high standing, member of the ruling council. The Wallachian *vornic* does not live up to the importance of his Moldavian counterpart. Few are the sources that mention him, and he had fiscal, legal, and military duties.<sup>92</sup>

The duties that townspeople held towards the ruler fall in several large categories:

1. direct taxes (on buildings) and duties collected on products obtained on the town domain (only for those dealing with agriculture);
2. taxes on commercial activity (customs);
3. work in strongholds, mills, town watch etc;
4. the duty to take part in the army.

<sup>88</sup> Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” p. 175.

<sup>89</sup> Năsturel, “Une victoire,” pp. 246–247.

<sup>90</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, p. 114.

<sup>91</sup> Georgescu, *Bizanțul*, p. 58.

<sup>92</sup> Paul I. Cernovodeanu, “Considerații privitoare la organizarea administrativă a orașului București în secolele XVI–XVII,” *MIM*, vol. I (1964), p. 170.

Fiscally, townspeople were treated by the ruler as a separate category. They paid the town tax (*birul oraşului*), first mentioned in an act issued by Mihail I.<sup>93</sup> The tax was collected by servants of the *pârcălab*, the *judeţ* setting the amount that was due for every townsman. They resorted to a similar procedure when work or other services were supplied. We are not aware whether townspeople were required to work for the prince, as were serfs. They probably only worked to maintain urban facilities and resources (mills, ponds, reinforcements).<sup>94</sup> In Transylvania, the latter obligations had been converted into a single tax, a situation that remains unconfirmed in Wallachia.<sup>95</sup>

Tax exemptions for townspeople (as individuals) are exceptional and were only granted by the prince.<sup>96</sup> In towns, the principle of collective responsibility was in force: the other townspeople covered for the ones running away or unable to pay the town tax.<sup>97</sup> If something was stolen, those keeping watch over the town had to make up for the loss.<sup>98</sup> Town inhabitants, as well as those of the villages, were required to turn in those committing felonies on their domain, or had to pay a tax called *duşegubina*. If any crime occurred on the town domain and the inhabitants did not turn in the outlaws, they all shared in the *duşegubina*. A later 1559 document, indicates that the townspeople of Floci were summoned in court by the inheritors of a Jew and four women, who had been killed in their town. Since they turned in the evil-doers and their stash to the civil servants, the inhabitants avoided punitive action.<sup>99</sup> In another situation, the inhabitants in a Bucharest neighbourhood were forced to pay the above tax in a homicide case. After paying it, the townspeople acquired compensation by selling a piece of land belonging to the criminal. In this case, the responsibility was only on one part of the town, where the murder had taken place.<sup>100</sup> Townspeople were not exempt of military duties. They were

<sup>93</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39.

<sup>94</sup> CDTR, VII, p. 146, doc. 393.

<sup>95</sup> Rüz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 79–80, 155.

<sup>96</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 82, doc. 95; p. 89, doc. 101; III, p. 50, doc. 45.

<sup>97</sup> CDTR, VI, p. 395, doc. 1072; p. 499, doc. 1334; Ştefan Trâmbaciu, *Câmpulul medieval în cincizeci de documente (1368–1800)* (Bucharest, 1997), p. 72, doc. 15.

<sup>98</sup> CDTR, VII, p. 280, doc. 810.

<sup>99</sup> *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din România*, vol. II, part 1, ed. Victor Eskenasy (Bucharest, 1988), p. 189, doc. X.

<sup>100</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 476, doc. 493.

to provide a number of soldiers, who were probably a different body in the prince's army. Military exemption was highly infrequent.<sup>101</sup>

In the 14th century, as Wallachia approached the final leg in its organization process, several customs duties were instated. They were chiefly economic in purpose, since they brought a special kind of income in the treasury. However, boundary customs also had political importance, since the prince asserted his sovereignty in the eyes of his neighbours by controlling them. A document by Vladislav II indicates the places where customs duties were collected: “in *târgs*, fords, or on mountain roads, from Severin to Brăila.”<sup>102</sup> There were also customs in major towns, near or within marketplaces. Located along the main roads, the customs were of two types: passage customs (Old Slav. *prohodna*) and goods customs (Old Slav. *trājna*).<sup>103</sup> In towns, customs duties were taxed off goods bought or sold in the marketplace. The Hungarian influence also bore upon the customs duties in Wallachia. Taxing based on the *tricesima* was introduced here, unlike Moldavian duties, which also adopted elements from the Mongol customs system.<sup>104</sup> In written documents, customs are noted under several names:

1. *tributum*, the Latin term in documents using this language;<sup>105</sup>
2. *vama*, the word which entered mainstream Romanian, Hungarian in origin (from *vám*),<sup>106</sup>
3. *cumercă*, originating in the Byzantine *kommerkion*, in itself a derivative from the Latinate *commercium*;<sup>107</sup>
4. *scala*, a term which initially designated the Levant harbours, where Genovese and Venetian merchants had their outlets.

Initially the *scala* probably only represented the customs levied in harbours, the term gaining new semantic ground, and covering all the

<sup>101</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 59, doc. 43 și p. 87, doc. 64.

<sup>102</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 186, doc. 106.

<sup>103</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 93, doc. 47; p. 118, doc. 62.

<sup>104</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, pp. 100–101.

<sup>105</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>106</sup> Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești*, p. 1390; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 173–175.

<sup>107</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 197, doc. 120; p. 218, doc. 134; Viorel Panaite, *Pace, război și comerț în Islam. Țările române și dreptul otoman al popoarelor (secolele XV–XVII)* (Bucharest, 1997), p. 260.

exit and customs points in the country.<sup>108</sup> The customs had customs officers (Rom. *schileri, vameși*) who controlled the traffic of merchandise and persons, taxing them as per indications by the prince.<sup>109</sup> Customs were farmed out once a year, usually to boyars, a practice which had endured since Mircea the Old's reign.<sup>110</sup> Each customs had a registry, which kept record of incoming and outgoing merchandise and taxes paid, as well as a "book" where persons crossing were noted.<sup>111</sup> Customs duties were of major importance in the fiscal mechanism, income obtained by the ruler off them being relatively high. Towns could not avail themselves of any large amounts, since these amounts would go the way of the treasury. Franco Sivori would note that, in latter half of the 16th century, 60000 scudi were collected in customs duties each year.<sup>112</sup> The few exemptions or reductions of customs duties we are aware of have been granted to communities, and not to individuals (for instance, to the inhabitants in Târgoviște).<sup>113</sup> The Brașov merchants enjoyed substantial tax reductions in Wallachia, following a trade privilege granted ever since 1368, when the first few customs are mentioned.<sup>114</sup>

We cannot end our discussion of the relations between the townspeople and the ruler without mentioning some conflicts between the two parties. Chronicles detail only one such incident in the Middle Ages. Vlad the Impaler believed the townspeople of Târgoviște to be responsible for the death of one of his brothers. The ruler applied different punishments: the "grand" and elderly ("the patriciate") were impaled, whereas the younger ones were taken on Easter to work with their families at the Poenari stronghold.<sup>115</sup> Research revealed that this involved an action during Vlad's second reign, who avenged the death of his brother, Mircea, slain in 1447 along with Vlad the Dragon, father of the two. This mass punishment was dated by historians to

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<sup>108</sup> Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 95, doc. LXXIV; DRH, B, III, p. 308, doc. 187; *Instituții feudale*, p. 429.

<sup>109</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 296, doc. 183; C. Rădulescu-Codin, I. Răuțescu, *Dragoslavele* (Câmpulung, 1923), p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> DRH, B, I p. 66, doc. 30; p. 279, doc. 172; II, p. 426, doc. 224; III, p. 117, doc. 71.

<sup>111</sup> DRH, B, I p. 278, doc. 172; II, p. 71, doc. 30.

<sup>112</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 14.

<sup>113</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 109, doc. 55.

<sup>114</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>115</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 4; *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 15.



1457, when Vlad the Impaler was in Târgoviște.<sup>116</sup> The conflict must be placed into context along with the power struggles between the two branches of the local dynasty, which were joined by both the large boyar families, and the influential members of the town community.<sup>117</sup> Still, the fact that the punished ones were thrown into forced stronghold labour is a rare occurrence. Forced labour is formally noted in only several documents, but the above-mentioned event is the only certification that these duties were ever put into practice (under grievous threat).<sup>118</sup> Of all internal chronicles, *Istoria Țării Românești* only states that young people were sent off to work, whereas *Istoriile domnilor* writes about women and children having the same fate. More extraordinary is their dispatch to work on Easter, which led Nicolae Stoicescu in describing the punishment inflicted upon the townspeople as a *dușegubina*, only in a more dire form.<sup>119</sup>

#### *The town domain*

In Wallachia, town territory was divided in two: the town proper and the domain (Rom. *ocină, moșie*). The housing area had houses, stores, churches, but also vineyards, gardens, orchards and mills. The owning of land and buildings in this area was complete, properties could be sold, bought, exchanged or inherited, without asking for the ruler's consent.<sup>120</sup> However, the community had to agree, and the *județ* and the 12 *pârgari* had to confirm it as well. In the 14th–15th centuries, the townspeople were the beneficiaries of these properties, however, from the latter half of the 16th century on, the number of properties owned by monasteries, the boyars and the ruler increases. Differences between older (Râmnic, Târgoviște) and newer towns can however be noted: in the first group, the number of properties for townspeople continued to dominate. In Câmpulung, only townspeople had the

<sup>116</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 198, doc. 115; Ștefan Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș (Dracula) între legendă și adevăr istoric*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1998), pp. 92–93.

<sup>117</sup> The conflict between the Dănești (Vladislav II) and the Drăculești (Vlad the Impaler) (see Pavel Chihaiia, *De la "Negru Vodă" la Neagoe Basarab. Interferențe literar-artistice în cultura românească a evului de mijloc* (Bucharest, 1976), pp. 150–151; Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, pp. 92–93).

<sup>118</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39.

<sup>119</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, *Vlad Țepeș* (Bucharest, 1976), p. 50.

<sup>120</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, p. 121.

right to own plots of land in town, a right which was periodically renewed by the rulers.<sup>121</sup> The right to *protimisis* existed in the town community, whereby a person in certain relations of solidarity (family, vicinity etc.) with another, who had to sell some of its goods, had priority in purchasing them.<sup>122</sup>

The domains of Wallachia towns rarely included villages (except for Floci),<sup>123</sup> and were not very large. Only the domains of the old towns of Câmpulung and Argeş, in the mountain area, spanned over large areas.<sup>124</sup> We can look for the origin of these domains in several directions, they are all connected to the ruler:

1. in “colonies”, the prince granted newcomers the land around the settlement to gain sustenance; based on the generous privileges granted by the first rulers of the country, settlers in Câmpulung and probably Argeş received full control of this territory;
2. where no colonisations existed, the situation is similar (land granted to the locals), only that the allotted land had been used by the inhabitants also before the settlement became a town; only the status of people changed, who, former serfs of the prince, turned free; the land which would become the future domain belonged to the lord, who granted it for use to the town inhabitants.

Data on these domains usually surface when rulers resorted to their right of ownership over them and began donating them. This process was off to a tentative start in the 16th century, and became common practice in the 18th century, when whole domains are being donated. The beneficiaries of donations were initially the monasteries, as well as the boyars later on.

Since the economic importance of towns was still acknowledged in the 16th century, rulers hesitated in donating their domains. Instead, they donated from their sources of income, the fords, the mills and the forests they held in towns. The statistics by Ion Donat show that, except for residences, mills were the most numerous properties that

<sup>121</sup> Răuţescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, p. 361; DRH, B, XXV, p. 262, doc. 250.

<sup>122</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 275, doc. VI; p. 277, doc. IX; *Instituții feudale*, pp. 390–392.

<sup>123</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 13, doc. 12.

<sup>124</sup> Răuţescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, p. 360, 363; DRH, B, V, p. 221, doc. 205; XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; XXV, p. 468, doc. 424.

rulers had in towns.<sup>125</sup> Except for Câmpulung, mills were donated in all the other towns in the country. The right to build a mill was also granted by the ruler.<sup>126</sup> This power allowed him to donate, regardless of whether fords were on town domains or elsewhere. The one being granted the right to build a mill could pick any ford, as long as it was not used, and also received the right to pick a place around it. A situation similar to that of mills is displayed by the *braniști*, which represented a forest destined for use by the prince.<sup>127</sup> In Wallachia, most of these forests were around towns, and were initially attached to their domains. The proximity to town made the *braniștea* easier to manage and oversee by representatives of the ruler in the territory. From the latter half of the 15th century on, the *braniștea* begin to be donated as well: Vlad the Monk donates the monastery at Glavacioc the *braniștea* in Slatina; Neagoe Basarab gave the monastery of Argeș the *braniștea* north of the town of Argeș. Radu of Afumați donated the Buzău bishopric the right to chop and gather wood in the forest near the town. Later on, Radu Paisie donated the entire *braniște*.<sup>128</sup>

The ruler could also donate parts of the duties collected from townspeople, especially those levied off goods gained by working domain land. The most frequent was the wine tax, called in Romanian the *vinărici*, an important source of income. This is what happens to the *vinărici* in Râmnic, donated to the monasteries of Govora and Ostrov.<sup>129</sup> The *vinărici* in Ocna Mare had been donated to the monastery in Bistrița, around 2000 l of wine being sent to the monastery at Iezer.<sup>130</sup> The monastery of Holy Trinity in Bucharest had been granted the right to collect from 150 houses in Târgoviște the buckets of wheat and barley, cheese, one lump of wax and around 10000 litres of wine.<sup>131</sup> The rulers did not renounce the *vinărici* by accident. Vineyards were one of the major resources in Wallachia, most towns having them. Owning a vineyard granted special status on the town domains. Places with vineyards in the Romanian Principalities

<sup>125</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 116–120.

<sup>126</sup> Emil Cernea, “Dreptul asupra vadului de moară,” *Analele Universității București, seria Drept*, vol. XL (1991), pp. 93–99.

<sup>127</sup> *Instituții feudale*, p. 56.

<sup>128</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 415, doc. 356; p. 454, doc. 242; III, p. 245, doc. 153; IV, p. 11, doc. 9.

<sup>129</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 457, doc. 280; p. 491, doc. 300.

<sup>130</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 364, doc. 326; XXIV, p. 145, doc. 110.

<sup>131</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 376, doc. 394.

were usually called “hill” (Rom. *deal*), because most vineyards were on higher ground, in the sun. Such “hills” are mentioned in the following towns: Târgoviște, Bucharest, Pitești, Floci. They are not certified in the towns of Câmpulung and Argeș, which were in an area that did not foster wine growth. The habit of naming them as such probably came from Transylvania, where “hills” bearing vineyards are noted in Sibiu ever since 1223 (*mons vinearum de villa Hermani*).<sup>132</sup> Vineyards around towns were firstly owned by the townspeople.<sup>133</sup> Since these vineyards were outside the inhabited area in towns, the right to use rule was applied in exchange for the payment of certain wine donations. Ever since the 16th century, monasteries were granted by rulers ever more vineyards around towns. Since they did not have the human and financial resources to maintain them, monasteries gave them over to the townspeople, who in their turn gave a part of the wine. A double control was exerted over the vineyard: the one who looked after the vineyard, who placed the cuttings in the ground until harvest time, had the right to transfer (sell, trade) and use the vineyard. However, he had no claim over the land, which still belonged to the original owner.<sup>134</sup> This method of working the vineyard is not specific only to the Romanian Principalities. The townspeople of Pressburg and Trnava had their own vineyards, but they also rented others, from the land owners of the area.<sup>135</sup>

An institution overlooked by researchers is the so-called “12 villages”.<sup>136</sup> They are distinct from the town domain, being recorded in documents barely in the latter half of the 17th century. They were a group of villages that served the needs of the ruler in towns or in customs houses, a reason for which they were chosen among settlements near them. They were probably not present here before the 17th century because it was only in this period that the phrase “12 villages” took root as a way to designate them, a phrase we have not identified in previous resources. In Moldavia, Dimitrie Cantemir claimed the existence of the same number of villages around urban centres in his

<sup>132</sup> DIR, XI–XIII, C, I, p. 199, doc. 145.

<sup>133</sup> DRH, B, XXII, p. 284, doc. 130.

<sup>134</sup> D. Mioc, Maria Bălan, “Aspecte ale rentei funciare feudale în Țara Românească. Vinăriciul boieresc (otaștina),” *SAI*, vol. VII (1965), pp. 130–131; Damaschin Mioc, “Les vignobles au Moyen Âge en Valachie. I. Les formes de propriété viticole,” *RRH*, vol. VI, no. 6 (1967), pp. 865–879.

<sup>135</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 259.

<sup>136</sup> Giurescu, *Anatefterul*, p. 366, doc. 1.

*Descriptio Moldaviae*: “the towns or *târgs* of Moldavia along with 12 villages closer to them.”<sup>137</sup> Other sources tell us that the villages dependent on the ruler’s households in towns were grouped into *ocoale*, and their number varied, without being strictly 12.<sup>138</sup> However, what was the purpose of these villages? Are they reminiscent of towns in Moldavia? In the 17th century, 12 villages grouped not only around towns, but also around simple *târgs* and customs houses are mentioned. Such groups of settlements are mentioned around the following settlements: Râmnicul Sărat and Buzău (grouped together), Ruși and Zimnicea, Gherghița, Târgoviște, Pitești and Slatina, Bucharest, Focșani, Odiovoia and Caracal.<sup>139</sup> The ones in Bucharest and at the customs in Rucăr, Dragoslavele and Căineni are added to this group.<sup>140</sup> It is likely that the towns where they are not mentioned (Argeș, Râmnic) did have their group of villages, which had been already donated until the 17th century. Jurisdiction-wise, these villages did not depend on the town, since they were the properties of rulers. Since the town *judet* was the representative of the townspeople, the one responsible for them was the *pârcălab*. Towns in Wallachia did not have enough autonomy and were not strong enough to form a group of villages to own and administer.

### *Social and ethnic structures*

Written sources show that those part of urban communities stood out in medieval Wallachia by a unique designation: *varoșani* (“townspeople”). The seal belonged to “the townspeople”, the ruler’s ordinance were addressed to “the townspeople”, and some lawsuits even occurred between various persons and “townspeople”.

The urban world had its own hierarchy. To better understand this hierarchy, we must take several major criteria into account: status, occupation and purpose. In the medieval times, legal standing was highly important, since it created the great divide of that age: free and

<sup>137</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea stării de odinioară și de astăzi a Moldovei*, vol. II, eds. Dan Slușanschi, Valentina Eșanu, Andrei Eșanu (Bucharest, 2007), p. 158, 274.

<sup>138</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96.

<sup>139</sup> *Anatefterul*, p. 366, 373–377, 379–381, doc. 1, 10, 15–17, 19–22.

<sup>140</sup> *Anatefterul*, p. 371, doc. 8; *Călători străini*, vol. X, part 1, p. 181; Rădulescu-Codin, Răuțescu, *Dragoslavele*, p. 21.

not free. The townspeople were exclusively free men. There are two large categories: merchants and craftsmen. Their rank divided them into ranking officials—the *județ*, the *pârgari*, the priests, the officials for the prince, and the non-ranking. Religion and ethnicity had their role in Wallachian urban society. Town communities were a mix of people with various origins and beliefs: Orthodox Romanians and Greeks, Catholic Saxons and Hungarians, Armenians, Jews, and Gypsies.

This motley array was headed by the happy few, the influential community members that we will henceforth refer to as “the patriciate”, a term traditionally used in historiography. Romanian historians were only tentative in claiming the existence of this patriciate. Society at large is of an otherwise limited interest in most studies referring to urban centres in the Romanian Principalities.<sup>141</sup> Radu Manolescu, Konrad G. Gündisch and Ștefan S. Gorovei are among the few to have devoted attention to the confirmation and insight into the patriciate in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania.<sup>142</sup> In sources south of the Carpathians, members of this group already feature under the name of “good people” or “grand people”.<sup>143</sup> They were made up of the more significant figures in town: former or present *județi* and *pârgari*, wealthy merchants and craftsmen, who engaged in business on higher levels, were well schooled and lived large, when compared to the rest of the townspeople. One of the first few mentions of a “good man” can be found in a document by Vlad the Dragon, who wrote to the inhabitants of Brașov about Zanvel of Târgoviște, who had been killed and robbed in Transylvania. The ruler requested that all the possessions that Zanvel had were to be returned, and their description shows him to have been very well-off: 250 florins, 500 hyperpyrons, a pouch with 300 asprons and a golden ring worth 10 florins. The clothes he was wearing are signs of affluence in their own right: Ypres clothing, a

<sup>141</sup> An exception to this are Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale,” pp. 141–144; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 108–124 and those mentioned in the note below.

<sup>142</sup> Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” pp. 91–99; Konrad G. Gündisch, “Patriciatul orășenesc medieval al Bistriței până la începutul secolului al XVI-lea,” *File de Istorie* (Bistrița) vol. IV (1976), pp. 147–181; Konrad G. Gündisch, *Das Patriziat Siebenbürgischer Städte im Mittelalter* (Köln, 1993); Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Note de istorie suceveană,” *Suceava. Anuarul* (Suceava) vol. X (1983), pp. 210–213; Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Cu privire la patriciatul orășenesc în Moldova medievală. Câteva observații preliminare,” *AIIAI*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (1988), pp. 253–265.

<sup>143</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privilegiate*, pp. 81–82, doc. LVI; p. 193, doc. CLIX; DRH, D, I, p. 351, doc. 255; B, IV, p. 118, doc. 90; V, p. 87, doc. 81; XI, p. 194, doc. 150; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 240, doc. 265.

sword and a cap. He was part of the Târgoviște patriciate, and also on intimate terms with the ruler, since the latter only allowed one week for the perpetrator to be found and punished, and the wealth to be returned to the inheritors.<sup>144</sup> Other members may be identified by the type of business they are involved in, as well as the attitude that the ruling house or the town leaders had towards them, who support their economic interests. In 1427, King Sigismund of Luxemburg intervened on behalf of *fidelis noster* Gașpar of Câmpulung.<sup>145</sup> Alexandru Aldea wrote in favour of Gașpar's son, Ioan, in 1431, who had some debts to collect; Ioan was called *nobilis viri* and *domini nostri et nostrum continuum servitorem*.<sup>146</sup> A certain Petermann in Câmpulung is present in Rome, part of the entourage for the same King Sigismund in 1433, once the latter was crowned emperor. In July, same year, Petermann himself asked from Pope Eugene IV indulgences for those that were to visit and contribute in the repair work on church St Jacob in Câmpulung.<sup>147</sup> The special link that Petermann entertained with the king is also proven by his granting of a place to settle in Transylvania, used by the townsman of Câmpulung and by his family after they left Wallachia on political grounds.<sup>148</sup> Among the prominent townspeople of Câmpulung, one was periodically chose as *goțman*, administrator for the goods of the Catholic church in town.<sup>149</sup> One such person was Iohannes, *generosus dominus* and *custos* for the church, buried in St Jacob in 1373.<sup>150</sup>

For centuries 14th–15th, trade with Transylvanian towns offered the townspeople of Wallachia the possibility to amass wealth and expand their influence. There were townspeople involved in trade with southern Danube, but this only increased in importance after the Balkan situ-

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<sup>144</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 81, doc. LVI; DRH, D, I, p. 351, doc. 255. The coins called “asprons” were made of silver and had been minted over time by Byzantines, as well as by the Bulgarians, the Turks, and the Romanians. When sources are not specific about the ones issuing them, it is impossible to state their country of origin and their exact value.

<sup>145</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. III (Bucharest, 1897), p. 82.

<sup>146</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 281, doc. 180.

<sup>147</sup> Daniel Barbu, “Pèlerinage à Roma et croisade. Contribution à l'histoire religieuse des Roumains dans la première moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *RRH*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1–2 (1994), pp. 31–33, 38–40.

<sup>148</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 356, doc. 256.

<sup>149</sup> *Călători străâni*, vol. V, p. 264.

<sup>150</sup> Anton-Maria del Chiaro Fiorentino, *Revoluțiile Valahiei*, trans. S. Cris-Cristian (Iași, 1929), pp. 11–12.

ation became more stable (after 1456). Grand merchants would trade metal goods. Radu the Great intervened in Braşov for Rădilă of Câmpulung, claiming that he be compensated for the 18000 knives that he had sold there.<sup>151</sup> In the Sibiu customs records, in 1500, Dragotă of Argeş features as having brought into Wallachia no less than 109000 knives, worth 130800 dinars. In another transport, the same person, no doubt a major tradesman, had purchased from Sibiu 70500 knives, worth 84600 dinars.<sup>152</sup> These figures reveal the financial and economic power of some of the Wallachians, at a time when iron was very expensive, and few could afford it. The registries in Braşov make separate mention of the grand merchants arriving from Wallachia, who are recorded under *mercatores magni seu grandi*.<sup>153</sup> In Slavonic documents, they were noted by the term *cupeţ*.<sup>154</sup> Another basis of the wealth of the urban patriciate were vineyards and wine trade. Business was run in the family. For instance, Stoica, Rădilă's son, took over his father's business in Braşov. In Râmnic, sources mention an affluent Armenian family (Hacicu), which did business with Jew usurers in Braşov, among others.<sup>155</sup> Families were usually created at group level. Dreanca *pârgar* took as his wife the daughter of Badea *pârcălab*, and received as dowry half a village,<sup>156</sup> whereas a cousin of Hans the sheepskinner married a tailor.<sup>157</sup> In towns they inhabited, the grand merchants could build homes with stove tiles, following a Transylvanian model. Such a home, with cellar, dating back to the former half of the 15th century was discovered in Râmnic and had belonged to a cloth salesman.<sup>158</sup> Another house, dated in the latter half of the 14th century, with pot-shaped and disk-shaped stove tiles and depictions of knights, was revealed in Târgovişte.<sup>159</sup> The travellers who crossed through this town had noticed "much better and much more opulent

<sup>151</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 221, doc. CLXXV.

<sup>152</sup> Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," p. 234.

<sup>153</sup> Manolescu, "Cu privire la problema patriciatului," p. 96.

<sup>154</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 291, doc. 266; VII, p. 37, doc. 26; p. 100, doc. 77; XI, p. 194, doc. 150.

<sup>155</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 316, doc. 196; p. 411, doc. 252; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 234, doc. CXCIV.

<sup>156</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 200, doc. 99.

<sup>157</sup> N. Iorga, *Scrisori și zapise de meșteri români* (Bucharest, 1926), p. 1, doc. I.

<sup>158</sup> Busuioc, "O casă de orașcan," pp. 119–142.

<sup>159</sup> Nicolae Constantinescu, Cornel Ionescu, "Asupra habitatului urban de la Târgovişte înainte de 1394. Repere din vatra curții domnești," *SCIVA*, vol. XXXI, no. 1 (1980), pp. 61–74.



houses” as opposed to Bucharest, where “houses were mostly made up of wood and clay, small but inhabitable.”<sup>160</sup>

In the 16th century, the patriciate changes slowly, but steadily. The phrase “good people” undergoes semantic expansion in documents, and comes to include other categories, such as priests.<sup>161</sup> The patriciate is joined by Greeks, Jews, and Armenians, most arriving from the Ottoman Empire. They gradually replace the Saxons and the Hungarians. We may see this transformation as an evolution to a new patriciate, more involved in its dealings with the Levant than with Central and Western Europe. This transition occurred after Hungary was conquered and Buda was turned into a *sandjak*, as the economy of the Romanian Principalities gradually shifted focus towards the Ottoman Empire.<sup>162</sup> The tendency of one part of the new patricians was to join the boyars or to obtain higher status than that of the townspeople. Some merchants use their intimate relations with the boyars and the ruler to gain privileged positions.<sup>163</sup> This process is not specific only for Wallachia. The patriciate was continuously changing in the rest of Europe as well. Many outsiders that settled in towns sought to amass wealth by trade and to gain functions in town, which brought them benefits. In a short while, they became family with the old patriciate or the nobles.<sup>164</sup>

Another major protagonist on the urban stage was the clergy and the Church. The authority conferred by religious service bestowed great prestige upon priests in the profoundly religious world of the Middle Ages. This is why they can be found taking major decisions for the town, in trials or the drawing of boundaries.<sup>165</sup> The Saxons in Câmpulung are a case of their own. They had the right to choose their parish priest, as in the royal towns of Transylvania, where churches were considered *exempta plebania*.<sup>166</sup> After 1500, the clergy in the ever-growing number of monasteries in towns gains impor-

<sup>160</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 8, 11.

<sup>161</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 318, doc. 270.

<sup>162</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 73–78.

<sup>163</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 282, doc. 212; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 321, doc. 335.

<sup>164</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 87–88; Balász Szelényi, “The Dynamics of Urban Development: Towns in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-century Hungary,” *American Historical Review* 2004 apr., pp. 360–386; Topolski, “Sixteenth-century Poland,” pp. 70–71, 74–89.

<sup>165</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 318, doc. 270.

<sup>166</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria poporului românesc*, ed. Georgeta Penleca (Bucharest, 1985), p. 143; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 288, doc. XXXVII.

tance. For towns, the Church, and especially the Orthodox one, had an ambivalent role. On the one hand, by being an economic force, the Church was a major client for merchants and artisans in towns. Their products and services catered to the demand of an ever-growing number of priests and monks. Even more churches and monasteries were being built, and it took a skilled workforce to construct them, as well as objects to adorn them. On the other hand, the Church sought a certain autonomy, by the numerous villages with serfs that had been donated to it, but also by the many exemptions it enjoyed, often at the expense of townspeople.<sup>167</sup> The ruler initially agreed to the sole construction of Catholic monasteries in towns with a prevailing Catholic faith. In Câmpulung, the Dominicans erected a monastery, reputed to work miracles, another Dominican place of worship being built in Târgoviște.<sup>168</sup> Instead, the first Orthodox monasteries, Vodița, Tismana, Cozia or Cotmeana were erected away from towns. From the 15th century on, Orthodox churches as well begin to approach the urban world: the Dealul monastery is built near Târgoviște.<sup>169</sup> This phenomenon augments in the next century, and especially in its latter half. Even though many monasteries were away from towns, the rulers donated to them land, mills, and even income in towns.<sup>170</sup>

As for the boyars, there were even fewer of them in towns before 1500. Their homes were especially in towns where the most important residences for the ruler existed: Argeș, Târgoviște, then Bucharest.<sup>171</sup> From the 16th century on, they begin purchasing even more properties in towns, except for Câmpulung, where they did not have this right.<sup>172</sup> As they accumulated houses, land, and stores, their economic power increases and they begin to compete with the townspeople.

The patriciate, the priests, and the few boyars in towns were a minority. The largest part of the community was made up of small merchants and craftsmen. Whereas merchants often feature in documents under this generic name, craftsmen are usually named by the

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<sup>167</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 66, doc. 30; p. 240, doc. 143; p. 448, doc. 275; DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 104, doc. 110.

<sup>168</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, pp. 81–82; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 20; vol. V, p. 211.

<sup>169</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 133, doc. 72.

<sup>170</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 457, doc. 280; p. 491, doc. 300; DRH, B, V, p. 364, doc. 326; XXIV, p. 145, doc. 110.

<sup>171</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, pp. 11–13.

<sup>172</sup> Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 335.

craft they were engaged in. From the former half of the 15th century on, sources mention a category of people involved in small business, called *siromahi* or, even rare, *săraci*. Their identification divided expert opinion in two. There are, on the one hand, those that consider them poor, even serfs. This is the perspective favoured by Constantin and Constantin C. Giurescu or Gheorghe I. Brătianu.<sup>173</sup> On the other hand, Ștefan Ștefănescu and Petre P. Panaitescu were the proponents of the *siromahi* as the lower layers of society, in rural areas and towns, unprivileged, who had their own wealth and managed it as it pleased.<sup>174</sup> Careful research into sources leads us to prefer the second theory, at least when considering the *siromahi* in towns. Many bearing this name are mentioned in the correspondence with Transylvanian towns, where they feature as involved in small trade, with animals, metal objects or various other products. The ruler steps in for them on various occasions, claiming that some withheld goods are to be returned or their rights are to be observed.<sup>175</sup> Documents indicate them as free men, without any lord except the ruler, who treated them “as his own” (as with all townspeople). We will agree to identify the *siromahi* as the general mass of the town population, made up of the lower strata. However, wealth distribution among their ranks was uneven, since not all were poor. We will find some of them doing business with the grand merchants of Brașov and Sibiu, as well as carrying relatively large amounts of money and expensive products. They were also not content with internal trade, and also traded abroad. The town *siromahi* were integrated in the community, availing themselves of its associated rights, so they must not be seen as unprivileged, as Ștefănescu and Panaitescu would have us believe. However, they were not patricians either. Those carrying large amounts of money or dealing in high-level trade are rarely called *siromahi* or *săraci* in documents. There was a ten-

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<sup>173</sup> Constantin Giurescu, “Despre rumâni,” in *Studii de istorie socială*, ed. Dinu C. Giurescu (Bucharest, 1993), p. 345; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 335; C. C. Giurescu, “Despre sirac și siromah în documentele slave muntene,” *RI*, vol. XIII, no. 1–3 (1927), pp. 25–36; Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române* (Bucharest, 1995), pp. 45–47.

<sup>174</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu, “Despre terminologia țărănimii dependente din Țara Românească în sec. XIV–XVI,” *SRDI*, vol. XV, no. 5 (1962), pp. 1158–1161; Panaitescu, *Obșteala țărănească*, pp. 46–47.

<sup>175</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 217, doc. 133; p. 234, doc. 145; p. 310, doc. 211; p. 350, doc. 253; Bogdan, *Documente privilegiate*, p. 78, doc. LIV; Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 266, doc. LXXVIII; Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 38, doc. 28.

dency to assimilate the *siromahi* with the *pauperes* in Latin documents,<sup>176</sup> but we would do well to be more cautious in this regard, because of the sources at hand. We will only accept a possible counterpart institution, taking a different course in Wallachia.

The lowest echelon of urban society was occupied by serfs (Rom. *rumâni*) and slaves (Rom. *robi*), who were not officially part of the town community. In towns, those dependent on boyars, and especially on monasteries, were few in number, and they were only rarely mentioned in 14th–15th century sources.<sup>177</sup> Had there been more of them, the acknowledgement papers that monasteries regularly requested from rulers would have mentioned them, since the religious establishments fiercely defended their rights. On the other hand, documents are testimony of the flight of the *rumâni* from domains, in an attempt to waive their dependence and their obligations, some seeking refuge in towns. This was why rulers allowed their masters full authority to look for them in the entire country, towns included.<sup>178</sup> It was only after 1500 that monasteries approach the towns, bringing serfs along with them, whom they placed on the outskirts (Buzău, Bucharest, Gherghița).<sup>179</sup> Therefore, we must rule out a claim unsubstantiated by historical sources, that states that more serfs or *rumâni* existed in the towns of the 14th–16th centuries.<sup>180</sup> Gypsy slaves also lived around or within towns, fulfilling various tasks around the residences of the prince or of the boyars or around monasteries. Gypsies used to live in *sălașe* (tents which house one or more families), and the place that brought together several of these tenements was called *țigănie*.<sup>181</sup> *Țigăni* existed in almost all towns. We believe that the largest ones were in major towns such as Târgoviște, Râmnic or Bucharest.<sup>182</sup> Some of the Gypsies dealt with extracting gold from riverbeds (the ruler's *țigani rudari* from Râmnic or those of the Cozia monastery),<sup>183</sup> other were

<sup>176</sup> Giurescu, "Despre sirac," p. 39.

<sup>177</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 198, doc. 98.

<sup>178</sup> DIR, XVII, B, III, p. 361, doc. 323; DRH, B, XXI, p. 11, doc. 9.

<sup>179</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 499, doc. 244; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 452, doc. 399; II, p. 220, doc. 204; IV, p. 211, doc. 227; Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 122–123.

<sup>180</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, pp. 339–340; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 119; V. Costăchel, P. P. Panaitescu, A. Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV–XVII)* (Bucharest, 1957), p. 169.

<sup>181</sup> Viorel Achim, *Țigani în istoria României* (Bucharest, 1998), p. 53.

<sup>182</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 98, doc. 49; VII, p. 32, doc. 22; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 178, doc. 190; XVII, B, II, p. 426, doc. 367.

<sup>183</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 619, doc. 420.

craftsmen, along with those without a stable residence.<sup>184</sup> Unlike serfs, slaves lacked any legal personality and were completely dependent on their masters, who did not have right of life or death over them, however.<sup>185</sup> Along with the ruler, the monasteries, and the boyars, there were also townspeople who owned Gypsies.<sup>186</sup> There are no Mongol slaves mentioned in Wallachia.

Urban society in the Principalities did have its marginals, those excluded from the community and living on the outskirts. Wallachian sources refer to them as the *mișei*. One group of such *mișei* lived near Câmpulung, ever since the beginning of the town. One hill near the town kept the place name of *Câmpul mișeilor* until the 19th century, reminiscent of their presence and of the area where they lived.<sup>187</sup> Other *mișei* lived near Râmnic, their presence being also certified by a place name: *la Mișei*.<sup>188</sup> The word *mișel* is Latin in origin and is derived from *misellus*, a name for lepers in Latin documents, which also found its way into Italian and German.<sup>189</sup> In Wallachia, the term was initially used in reference to lepers in Romanian (*prokajen* in Old Slavonic documents).<sup>190</sup> As the number of lepers dwindled, the word lost its old meaning and gained the pejorative meaning of “worthless man”. The Serbian *gubav* was used to refer to this category of the sick.<sup>191</sup> From the 16th century on, a new term is certified, that of *calic*, Ukrainian in origin, which has a wider scope, indicating the debilitated.<sup>192</sup>

The lepers on the outskirts of Câmpulung and Râmnic had a well-defined status, that Nicolae Vătămanu believed to have existed ever since the dawn of Wallachia. We may relate this category with Saxons in the above-mentioned towns. Being Catholics, they introduced in Wallachia the tradition of leper care.<sup>193</sup> The Catholic church of St

<sup>184</sup> *Istoria politică și geografică*, pp. 33–34.

<sup>185</sup> Achim, *Țigani*, p. 38.

<sup>186</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 310, doc. 163; VIII, p. 254, doc. 163.

<sup>187</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, part. II, p. 117.

<sup>188</sup> DRH, B, VIII, p. 510, doc. 313; XI, p. 412, doc. 306.

<sup>189</sup> Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis*, p. 692; *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VI, pp. 631–634.

<sup>190</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 20, doc. 16; VII, p. 205, doc. 154; Mardarie Cozianul, *Lexicon slavo-românesc și tâlcuirea numelor din 1649*, ed. Grigorie Crețu (Bucharest, 1900), p. 218.

<sup>191</sup> CDTR, IV, p. 654, doc. 1514 bis; Nicolae Vătămanu, *De la începuturile medicinei românești* (Bucharest, 1966), p. 94, doc. I.

<sup>192</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 19, doc. 15; Paul Cernovodeanu, Nicolae Vătămanu, “Considerații asupra “calicilor” bucureșteni în veacurile al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea. Câteva identificări topografice legate de așezările lor,” *MM*, vol. III (1965), pp. 26–27; Vătămanu, *De la începuturile*, pp. 15–21.

<sup>193</sup> Vătămanu, *De la începuturile*, pp. 50–52.

Elisabeth was rumoured to cure the sick, and in Transylvania, places of worship with her as their patron would look after the lepers.<sup>194</sup> Once the townspeople of Câmpulung were granted privileges, the first rulers also regulated the status of lepers here.<sup>195</sup> The documents of the Mățău village (near Câmpulung), that was bound to care for the lepers, mentions the old privileges from Radu Negru, Vladislav II, Neagoe Basarab, Radu of Afumați and many others.<sup>196</sup> Vlad the Impaler's reign presents us with one reaction against the *mișei* and the debilitated. One chronicle of the time, *Viața lui Vlad Țepeș*, tells the story of how the needy were disposed of. The ruler had commanded that all who were "old and sick or stricken, be it with poverty, blindness or lameness" were to gather in a certain place. After having offered them a feast, the ruler had ordered that the house they were in was to be locked down and set on fire.<sup>197</sup> We cannot take these events for granted. *Viața lui Vlad Țepeș* also included many Saxon anecdotes, which disparaged the ruler, since he was not on the best of terms with the Saxons of Transylvania.<sup>198</sup> Along with the *mișei*, who had a specific status, beggars in towns lived off the charity of the ruler and the townspeople, receiving clothes and food on every major holiday. A late account tells us that, on the second day of Christmas, in 1583, Petru Cercel gave away food and clothing to all the beggars in Bucharest.<sup>199</sup>

A good part of documents and narrative testimonies show that Romanians were predominant in most Wallachian towns. An exception to this were the oldest towns in the country, where groups of Germans and Hungarians had settled. In the 15th century, newer towns had Balkanic colonists coming in: the Greeks, the Ragusans, the Jews, Armenians, and even Turks. Foreigner status varied by their faith. For Christians (Orthodox and Catholic), there was no interdiction on owning land, regardless of whether they settled in a rural or urban environment. Those of a different faith than the Christian could not own land in villages. The ruler took interest in developing towns, so the above-mentioned principle was not applied for Jews and Armenians,

<sup>194</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 211.

<sup>195</sup> Vătămanu, *De la începuturile*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>196</sup> Ion I. Șucu, "Contribuțiuni la istoricul satului Mățău-Muscel," *RA*, vol. IV (1940–1941), p. 144; CDTR, IV, p. 654, doc. 1514 bis; Vătămanu, *De la începuturile*, p. 94, doc. I; p. 96, doc. II.

<sup>197</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 202, 209.

<sup>198</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 198–199.

<sup>199</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 11.

who had the right to full possession of land in towns. Armenians could also own vineyards. This was the case both in Moldavia, and in Wallachia as well.<sup>200</sup> Muslims were believed to be heathen and had no right to own any land in the Romanian Principalities. If they died, they could not even be buried here.<sup>201</sup> The fact that rulers bypassed the faith principle in case of towns reveals that the central authority was keenly overseeing the colonisation process, considered to be beneficial for the country, and for the treasury as well.

In many cases, it is difficult to identify the foreigners in documents, since their ethnic origin is not always stated. As for person names, caution is needed, since a name does not always coincide with a certain ethnicity. For instance, we may find names that seem Hungarian, but which have the *săși* description attached to them (Ișțfan the “Saxon”).<sup>202</sup> The name of *săși* extended over all the Catholic colonists arriving from Transylvania.<sup>203</sup> Germans and Hungarians came to Wallachia as part of the colonisation in the 13th–14th centuries, when they were the majority, at least in the town of Câmpulung.<sup>204</sup> Germans were largely present in Argeș, Târgoviște, and Râmnic. Each community had its own church, some truly impressive (St Jacob in Câmpulung, St Mary in Târgoviște). A bishopric was founded for the Catholics of Muntenia in 1381, in Argeș. Around 1380, Severin saw the foundation of another Catholic bishopric, which covered the territory west of the Olt. The reasons for founding bishoprics were political and religious, the pope hoping to convert to Catholicism the rulers or the leading figures of the country. Several bishops were appointed for the bishopric in Argeș, but few came to the diocese.<sup>205</sup> The reform severed the Wallachian Catholics and Rome. Hungarians and Saxons in Transylvania switched to Calvinism and Lutheranism, being followed by the Saxons in Wallachia as well. A large part of them left for Transylvania for good.<sup>206</sup> In 1581, when missionary Jeronim

<sup>200</sup> Codrescu, *Uricariul*, vol. XI, p. 263; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 234, doc. CXCIV.

<sup>201</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 297–298; Maxim, *Țările române și Înalta Poartă*, pp. 242–245.

<sup>202</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 219, doc. 230.

<sup>203</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 192, doc. 94.

<sup>204</sup> Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 335.

<sup>205</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria bisericii românești și a vieții religioase a românilor*, vol. I, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1929), p. 66; Pascu, *Contribuții documentare*, p. 65.

<sup>206</sup> For the effects of the Reform on Catholics on Wallachian towns, see Laurențiu Rădvan, “Catolicii din orașele Țării Românești în a doua jumătate a secolului al

Arsengo comes to visit them, the only major community of Saxons was in Câmpulung, with only around 400 members left, in a town with 900 Romanian households. At that point, the Dominican monastery was derelict, and the Saxon church had a Lutheran priest conducting service.<sup>207</sup> Even though they had lost their language until the end of the 17th century, the Saxons in Câmpulung kept their religion and remained the largest Catholic group in Wallachia.

As did many foreign monks come to the royal palaces in Central Europe, in Hungary and Poland, seeking to reinforce and uphold faith,<sup>208</sup> so did Greek or Southern-Slavonic monks come to the ruling residences in Wallachia. The arrival of Greeks probably intensified after the Metropolitan Church was founded in 1359, when the metropolitan Iachint of Vicina was brought in, as well as the monks following him. Other Greeks arrive during Mircea the Old's reign: in 1415, the Greek merchants Polos is recorded as possessing significant wealth, amassed when he was in service of the ruler of Wallachia.<sup>209</sup> During that same time, in Târgoviște, more persons with Greek names appear.<sup>210</sup> They sought refuge in Wallachia due to political and confessional pressures, fleeing the Ottoman expansion. After the fall of the Bulgarian and the Byzantine empires, Greeks remained involved in the Black Sea and the Danube trade, even more of them entering Wallachian towns.<sup>211</sup> They were also involved in trade with Transylvanian towns, rivalling local merchants, who were quick to disprove of their presence.<sup>212</sup> Most Greeks settled in Bucharest, where several 16th documents mention them. Some of them gain wealth and are recorded buying or selling houses, stores and plots of land in town, especially in the marketplace area.<sup>213</sup> The Greeks settled in other towns as well: Târgoviște, Pitești, Buzău, Gherghița, Târgșor.<sup>214</sup> Their strength and

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XVI-lea și prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea," *Revista de Istorie Socială*, vol. VIII–IX (2003–2004), pp. 81–111.

<sup>207</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 510.

<sup>208</sup> Zientara, "Foreigners in Poland," p. 6.

<sup>209</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 35.

<sup>210</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39; p. 102, doc. 52.

<sup>211</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 356, doc. CCCXI; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 152, doc. 279.

<sup>212</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 74–78; Tocilescu, *534 documente*, p. 340, doc. 343.

<sup>213</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 259, doc. 238; p. 291, doc. 266.

<sup>214</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 219, doc. 230; p. 312, doc. 326; VI, p. 220, doc. 178; DRH, B, XI, p. 355, doc. 268; p. 282, doc. 212.



number increase constantly, so they become the major ethnic group in towns, after Romanians.

In the 14th–16th centuries, Ragusans and Italians arrive. The Ragusans did business with Serbian towns, where they crossed into Wallachia as well.<sup>215</sup> They did not avoid Bulgaria, where they had consulates inspired by Italian towns.<sup>216</sup> Some of them settled temporarily or for good in towns north of the Danube. In 1438, the names of some Ragusans were noted in Târgoviște, who went to trial over disputes regarding quantities of cloth.<sup>217</sup> A document issued around 1500 by the *județ* of Brăila certified the status of townsman of a certain Mihoci Latinețul for the inhabitants of Brașov. A former native Ragusan, he had lived in Brăila for five years.<sup>218</sup> The Ragusans continue to intermediate trade in the 16th century as well.<sup>219</sup> During the reign of Petru Cercel, Franco Sivori noted that the service in the church of the monastery of St Francis in Târgoviște was attended by “all the Italians, French, and many Ragusans trading in Wallachia.”<sup>220</sup> Italians were few in number. Most visited the country only briefly, following business incentives. Gașpar “the Italian” is mentioned in 1469, when he went to trial over pepper in Târgoviște, but we cannot tell whether he was a resident or not.<sup>221</sup> After the centres they held by the Black Sea or the Danube fell, the number of Italians decreased gradually. In the 16th century, they are present as merchants, doctors, clerks or architects, at the request of rulers.<sup>222</sup>

Armenian families also lived in towns, but their number was not as great as in Moldavia, where they had arrived from the north, from

<sup>215</sup> Panăitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 125.

<sup>216</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 781, doc. 638; Ioanna D. Spisarevska, “Les relations commerciales entre Dubrovnik et les régions bulgares sous la domination ottomane (XV–XVI<sup>e</sup> s.),” *EH*, vol. VII (1975), p. 104; Ćirković, “Unfulfilled Autonomy,” pp. 163–164.

<sup>217</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc, epoca veche*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1925), p. 129.

<sup>218</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 236, doc. CCXXVI.

<sup>219</sup> S. Goldenberg, “Italieni și raguzani în viața economică a Transilvaniei în secolul al XVI-lea,” *SRDI*, vol. XVI, no. 3 (1963), pp. 612–616; Francisc Pall, “Relațiile comerciale dintre brașoveni și raguzani (cu documente inedite despre negoțul lânii în anul 1578),” *RA*, new series, vol. I (1958), pp. 102–107.

<sup>220</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 12.

<sup>221</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 356, doc. 311; Iorga, *Istoria comerțului*, p. 128.

<sup>222</sup> Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1929), p. 124, doc. 160; Endre Marosi, “Partecipazione di architetti militari veneziani alla costruzione del sistema della fortezze di confine in Ungheria tra il 1541 e il 1593,” in *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay (Budapest, 1975), p. 200; *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 12, notes 34 and 35.

Podolia or Galician Rus'.<sup>223</sup> From here, but from Constantinople as well, some Armenians crossed into Wallachia. In one blurry reference, Johann Schiltberger mentions the arrival of some Armenians in Bulgaria and Wallachia around 1400.<sup>224</sup> They can be found in Argeș, Târgoviște and Râmnic, where they are part of the town patriciate.<sup>225</sup> In the 16th century, Asia Minor was the most significant source of immigration. Large communities emerged in Târgoviște, and then in Bucharest.<sup>226</sup> Along with Armenians, Jews appear as well, whose presence in towns of Wallachia is recorded beyond a doubt by documents only in the 16th century. Some arrived even before this century, but were not recorded since they were few in number and dealt with trading or exchanging/lending money. Until around 1500, they were Balkanic in origin (Romaniotes)<sup>227</sup> and Central European (the Ashkenazi). The persecutions in Central and Western Europe determined the latter group to leave to the east. In 1360 and 1376, the kings of Hungary decreed that they be exiled from their kingdom, the Jews in France (1394) and Bavaria (1470) having a similar fate.<sup>228</sup> Information on the migration of some of these Jews to the Bulgarian, and then to the Ottoman Empire was preserved, where the attitude towards them was favourable.<sup>229</sup> In Wallachia, the witness of a donation act in 1425 bear a Jewish-sounding name (Ștefan, son of Han David), but we cannot tell whether he was really Jewish.<sup>230</sup> The situation of European Jews changed dramatically after 1492 and 1497, when harsh measures were taken against the Sephardi Jews in Spain and Portugal, who were

<sup>223</sup> Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews," pp. 360–365.

<sup>224</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 31.

<sup>225</sup> DH, vol XV, part I, pp. 152–153, doc. 279–280; Bogdan, *Documente private*, pp. 81–82, doc. LVI; DRH, B, I, p. 316, doc. 196; p. 411, doc. 252; D, I, p. 351, doc. 255; Iorga, *Istoria comerțului*, p. 132.

<sup>226</sup> H. Dj. Siruni, "Armenii în viața economică a țărilor române," *Balkanica* (Bucharest), vol. II–III (1939–1940), p. 116; Grigore Goilav, "Bisericile armenie de prin țările române," *RIAF*, vol. XII, part II (1911), p. 457; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 3, 216, 390.

<sup>227</sup> For the role and attitude towards Jews in the Bulgarian empire, see Nikolaj Kočev, "The Question of Jews," pp. 60–79. One text written by a rabbi mentions the Karaite Jews who traded between the Byzantium, Russia, and Poland, crossing Bulgaria and the "Danube countries" (*Izvoare și mărturii*, vol. I, p. 9, doc. 6).

<sup>228</sup> Fine Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 449–450; *Izvoare și mărturii*, p. 11, doc. 10–11.

<sup>229</sup> Esther Benbassa, Aron Rodrigue, *The Jews of the Balkans. The Judeo-Spanish Community, 15th to 20th Centuries*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1995), pp. 4–6; Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium*, p. 289, doc. 96; the timeline for Jewish settlement in the Balkans in *The Balkan Jewish Communities*, ed. Daniel J. Elazar (Lanham, 1984), p. 61.

<sup>230</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 112, doc. 57.

exiled or forced to convert. They migrated massively into the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, reaching the Danube, where they can be found in Nikopol and Vidin.<sup>231</sup> Their arrival leads to an adoption of Sephardi traditions in this area, at the expense of the Romaniote and Ashkenazi ones. This shift leads to an increase in numbers for Jews in Wallachia as well. Around 1550, there was a group of Jews in Bucharest led by David Ibn Usa, possibly the religious leader of the community. It is at this point that Isac Rufus and Habib Amato are mentioned as well, store owners in town.<sup>232</sup> David Ibn Usa was well connected to the rabbi of Salonic, a powerful Sephardi centre, so the Jews in Bucharest were probably also Sephards.<sup>233</sup> The Jews enjoyed a certain autonomy within the community, their status being regulated by ordinance. The oldest ordinances date back to the 18th century, but the local Jewish archives seem to have retained 16th–17th century documents as well.<sup>234</sup>

Isolated groups of Serbians and Bulgarians came into towns, seeking refuge from overtaxing and the religious oppression they were subjected to by the Ottomans south of the Danube. They are mentioned later, usually under one generic designation, that of *sârbi*.<sup>235</sup> One group of Bulgarians crossed into Wallachia once the bishop of Vidin fled here around 1372.<sup>236</sup> In a document that reinstated the metochions in Serbia for the monasteries of Tismana and Vodița, despot Stefan Lazarević mentions the people “of my country,” possibly Serbs who had fled “to the Hungarian or Bulgarian country.”<sup>237</sup> This information confirms the vast population shifts south to north, where people sought refuge against Ottoman attacks. When mentioning the expedition by Walerand de Wavrin, the crossing of the river by Bulgarians is also recorded, with Vlad the Dragon asking them to settle in the less populated areas (1445). It was claimed that over 12000 people had crossed the water.<sup>238</sup> This is an obviously overstated figure, but this first-hand

<sup>231</sup> Benbassa, Rodrigue, *The Jews*, p. 9.

<sup>232</sup> *Izvoare și mărturii*, vol. I, p. 30, doc. 38; p. 34, doc. 42.

<sup>233</sup> Benbassa, Rodrigue, *The Jews*, p. 9.

<sup>234</sup> Victor Neumann, *Istoria evreilor din România. Studii documentare și teoretice* (Timișoara, 1996), pp. 33–34.

<sup>235</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 34, doc. 24; Stelian Brezcanu, “Schei/Șchei. Etnonimie și toponimie românească,” in *Identități și solidarități*, pp. 363–364.

<sup>236</sup> DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 25, doc. 19.

<sup>237</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 67, doc. 31.

<sup>238</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 112.

account captures a real event. Ultimately, another group of Bulgarians settled north of the Danube, during Vlad the Impaler's reign.<sup>239</sup>

The presence of Southern-Slavonic elements in towns is sporadically mentioned in documents. Specifically, archaeological research confirmed that bogomils were among those crossing the Danube and settling around towns. The issue of the bogomils paved the way to an ample debate, triggered by the mystery that surrounds these communities. Sources relate close to nothing about them, about their habits or organization. During Stefan Nemanja's reign, in Serbia (around 1170), a great church council was held, condemning a heresy which sources note as stating that Jesus Christ had not been the Son of God. On this occasion, it was decided that the leader of these heretics was to be banished. Some historians believed that what this heresy promoted resembles the dualist doctrine of the bogomils, but no consensus has been reached, because of gaps in sources.<sup>240</sup> In Bulgaria, after the second empire emerged, in 1211, emperor Boril summoned a church council that denounced the bogomils. This measure was supposed to reinforce the positions of the emperor, but also those of the Church, the bogomils being seen as a threat to internal stability. Another synod dedicated to condemning this heresy was held during the time of Ivan Alexander, in 1360, this being the final reference to bogomilism in Bulgaria. Ottoman sources do not mention bogomils at all, since they probably were no longer a significant element in Christian society south of the Danube.<sup>241</sup> It is believed that, after the persecutions following 1211 and 1360, groups of bogomils took refuge in the Romanian Principalities as well, arriving in waves.<sup>242</sup> One group settled near Câmpulung, in a colony that became a neighbourhood of the town after 1500.<sup>243</sup> Archaeological excavations revealed here, and in a neighbouring village, traces of burial rites untypical of the Orthodox: a special arrangement of the forearms and the hands, a complete lack of the funeral inventory, including clothing, a stele representing the palm of a hand, etc. These habits were ascribed to the bogomils, who had supposedly settled near town beginning with the 14th

<sup>239</sup> *Cronicle slavo-române*, p. 201, 208; see also Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, pp. 116–117.

<sup>240</sup> Fine Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 41.

<sup>241</sup> Fine Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 99–100; 440–442.

<sup>242</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 322–323.

<sup>243</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 248, doc. 229.

century.<sup>244</sup> Another group settled near Râmnic, but this is a special situation, since local documents contain a term that defines heretics in Western Europe: *catar*. Alexandru Sacerdoțeanu demonstrated the use of this term in the Romanian-inhabited area as well, where its meaning was close to the one in the West (“excommunication”).<sup>245</sup> Several late documents mention the places in *Fântâna Catarăi*, near Râmnic and Ocna Mare, indicating the presence of a bogomil group there, at a date that is impossible to pinpoint.<sup>246</sup> After having presented the Saxons in Râmnic, Jeronim Arseno the missionary writes about a group of Paulicians, who “do not worship the cross and no one can talk to them,” who were at a five days’ trip from Silistra.<sup>247</sup> In the Middle Ages, a trip between this town and Râmnic took around five-six days.

Once the Ottoman Empire imposed its dominion all the way to the Danube, Turks merchants begin visiting Wallachia as well. One year after the fall of Constantinople, the Sibiu *judex* mentioned in one letter the large numbers of Turks that would visit the fairs in Wallachia (1454).<sup>248</sup> Two decades later, Laiotă Basarab wrote a letter to Brașov, notifying its inhabitants of the arrival in Bucharest of a Turkish merchant “with merchandise, good and plenty.”<sup>249</sup> The numbers of Turks trading goods and money (usury) increased in the 16th century. Even more locals begin borrowing from them to erase debts.<sup>250</sup> Some Turks married Romanian women, as does one janissary, who marries the former wife of a barber in Bucharest.<sup>251</sup> According to the agreements (*ahidnâme*) concluded between rulers of the Romanian Principalities and the sultans, the Turks (and Muslims as a rule) could not own lands and wealth north of the Danube. An exception to this were the future

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<sup>244</sup> Flaminu Mârțu, “Prezențe arheologice bogomilice în zona Câmpulung-Muscel, județul Argeș,” *Studii și comunicări* (Pitești) vol. II (1969), pp. 219–225; G. Cantacuzino, “Les tombes de Bogomiles découvertes en Roumanie et leurs rapports avec les communautés hérétiques byzantines et balkaniques,” in *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des études byzantines*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 515–523.

<sup>245</sup> Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, “Catarii” la Râmnicul Vâlci,” *Mitropolia Olteniei* (Craiova) vol. XIII, no. 5–6 (1961), pp. 319–320; Scriban, *Dicționarul limbii românești*, p. 239.

<sup>246</sup> DRH, B, XXIV, p. 253, doc. 189; XXXII, p. 136, doc. 126; CDTR, IV, p. 495, doc. 1107; p. 612, doc. 1406.

<sup>247</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 510.

<sup>248</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 440, doc. 323.

<sup>249</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privilegiate*, p. 123, doc. XCVIII.

<sup>250</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 342, doc. 250; p. 338, doc. 246.

<sup>251</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 259, doc. 238.

*kaza* in Brăila and Giurgiu, that had a different status, since they were under direct Ottoman control.<sup>252</sup>

The already-mentioned Gypsy slaves lived on the outskirts of towns, segregated from townspeople. They began entering Wallachia in the latter half of the 14th century, probably beginning with Vladislav I's reign.<sup>253</sup>

A more forbidding task is drawing up an estimate of town population. No population polls exist for the 14th–18th centuries, the only data in the 16th century being provided by foreign travellers, especially by Catholic missionaries. However, their data is either the result of approximations or exaggeration, so we cannot rely too much on them. Small towns probably had up to 1000 inhabitants, and larger ones, including the capitals (Câmpulung, Târgoviște, then Bucharest), up to 5000.<sup>254</sup> The same figure goes for Moldavia as well.

### *Economy*

Merchants were key in urban society, so their main occupation, trade, was the essence of urban economy. Trade was at the foundation of town development in the 14th century and continued to be a major economic component until the dawn of modern times. Preserved sources limit our perception on town economy, since they provide information exclusively relating to external trade. The first half of the 14th century sees one alternate route of the road linking Hungary to the Black Sea and the Byzantine Empire stabilize. After crossing Transylvania and reaching Brașov, this alternate route would cross the mountains at Câmpulung, where it split: the main road (*via Braylan*) reached the Brăila port by the Danube, crossing Târgoviște, Târgșor, Gherghița, Buzău; one secondary road crossed Argeș, Pitești, Slatina and Turnu, where it crossed the Danube to Bulgaria at Nikopol; from Slatina, travellers could enter Oltenia, at Vidin.<sup>255</sup> By controlling the southern Moldavian region, the rulers of Wallachia also gained control over another road linking Brașov to the Black Sea. This road would cross the mountains via the Oituz pass, the most significant

<sup>252</sup> Maxim, *Țările române și Înalta Poartă*, pp. 242–245.

<sup>253</sup> Achim, *Țigani*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>254</sup> *Călători străini*, II, p. 510; V, pp. 207–208, 215.

<sup>255</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46; B, I, p. 148, doc. 84; III, p. 184, doc. 114.

among areas east of the Carpathians and Transylvania. It would then descend on the valley of the Trotuș towards Putna, Tecuci, probably Olteni and Galați, up to the port of Kilia. The rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia fought over this road and the area it crossed for several decades (around 1420–1473). It was ultimately Wallachia that lost the battle.<sup>256</sup> Trade with Transylvania made the urban economy peak in Wallachia between the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th. The waiving of Brăila by the Ottomans (1538–1540) was the effigy of a new crisis, that compounded the effects of the religious Reform and other factors that were a negative influence on the development of towns in Wallachia.

Trade relations with Transylvanian towns were established, as the ruler of Wallachia took his vassal oath to the king of Hungary, Louis of Anjou. The latter made considerable political efforts to expand control over the mouths of the Danube. Although his plan was not as successful as he deemed it to be, some actions had long-term consequences. Among them, the 1368 privilege. The king had tried, ever since 1358, to ensure customs liberties for merchants in Brașov who travelled to the Danube. We are not aware of any effect the document issued then had in Wallachia, which held control over land in which merchants had been granted liberties.<sup>257</sup> Ten years later, negotiations set new rules for the merchants of Brașov (1368). They were granted tax exemptions for trade undertaken in Wallachia, as well as for trade with Vidin (by eliminating the Slatina customs). However, they were forced to pay the Câmpulung customs, one of the major markets of the country. Until the reign of Mircea the Old, trade and customs relations with the inhabitants of Brașov were changed again. Radu I or Dan I modified the privilege, introducing new customs duties. The document that contained these modifications has been lost to the passage of the time,<sup>258</sup> but we have its later reinstatements, from 1412–1413 on.<sup>259</sup> The Câmpulung customs house was eliminated, but taxes had to be

<sup>256</sup> Papacostea, “Politica externă,” pp. 13–28.

<sup>257</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39. The 1358 document sparked a vast debate in Romanian historiography: Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, pp. 143–144; Șerban Papacostea, “Triumful luptei pentru neatârnamare: întemeierea Moldovei și consolidarea statelor feudale românești,” in *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, pp. 170–172; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 115; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, p. 305; Holban, *Din cronica*, pp. 148–152.

<sup>258</sup> Holban, *Din cronica*, p. 150; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>259</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, p. 118; pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121.

paid for certain products nearby, at the stronghold of Dâmbovița, and at Rucăr as well. Taxes on fish were added in Brăila, Târgșor, Târgoviște and the stronghold of Dâmbovița. Another provision stated that the compensation by shared responsibility for members of the community was lifted and replaced by individual responsibility. Whoever had a debt was to find their debtor and could not get their money back off one of their fellow citizens. The ruler was to settle disputes over trade, in case of his subjects, and the rulers of Brașov for their own.<sup>260</sup> Along with Wallachian privileges, Brașov had gained in 1369 from King Louis staple right,<sup>261</sup> as well as monopoly for wax brought from south of the Carpathians and the freedom to take merchandise to Vienna.<sup>262</sup> Staple right initially applied only to Polish and German merchants, who were joined in the former part of the 15th century at the latest by those arriving from Wallachia. The first law that requires the last group to sell their goods in Brașov is dated 1468.<sup>263</sup> These measures effected Wallachian trade, since they granted Brașov (and Sibiu as well) control over products taken south of the mountains, as well as over those entering Transylvania. There was a negative impact. Prices varied by their origin: they increased for exported goods and were low for those entering Transylvania. It also hindered the freedom to travel in Transylvania for merchants from Wallachian towns.

The staple right was no uncommon procedure in the Middle Ages, but it sometimes sparked real trade wars. Hungarian towns faced the same issue in the former part of the 14th century, when Vienna was granted staple right. King Charles Robert retaliated by enacting limitations on trade with Austria. This measure was not supported by Louis, privileges granted to Viennese merchants being extended.<sup>264</sup> In their turn, to counteract the negative effects of the staple right for Brașov, Wallachian rulers (probably Mircea the Old) negotiated a privilege for their townspeople on this market. Dan II would confirm this privilege in 1431, that benefited merchants in the towns of Muntenia, Câmpulung, Argeș, Târgșor, Gherghița, Brăila, Buzău, Floci and the local *târgs* in Rucăr, Săcuieni and the stronghold of Dâmbovița.<sup>265</sup> The

<sup>260</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 217, doc. 133.

<sup>261</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 146, doc. CX.

<sup>262</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 135, doc. 86.

<sup>263</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 69, doc. 121.

<sup>264</sup> Zs P. Pach, "Levantine Trade and Hungary in the Middle Ages (Theses, Controversies, Arguments)," *Etudes Historiques Hongroises* (Budapest) vol. I (1975), p. 296.

<sup>265</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.



document contained the right of these merchants to travel to Braşov and sell “whatever they pleased, be it wax, tallow, silver, gold, pearls, whatever they saw fit, without fear of anything,” and to buy from there “cloth, silver, florins, whatever they pleased.” The mutual relations governing trade with Braşov were not always complied with, especially by the townspeople of Transylvania or their customs officers. Proof to this are the many interventions by Wallachian rulers in favour of their own merchants. Despite them, the relationship had been thrown out of balance from the start. The interests of merchants from Wallachia clashed with the staple right in Braşov, and they often had to sell at the price of the market there. Instead, merchants from Braşov had freedom to travel wherever they wished in the entire Wallachia.<sup>266</sup>

After around 1450, the situation begins to change. Due to an increase in Ottoman influence, the international political status of Wallachia was challenged. Negotiations between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire stated that, beginning with 1451, rulers were to acknowledge vassal status towards both the kingdom and the empire, and both powers were committing to respect its autonomy. Taking advantage of the new balance of relations between Wallachia and Hungary, Radu the Handsome attempted to introduce the staple right for merchants arriving from Braşov.<sup>267</sup> We cannot tell for which town this right was instated (Câmpulung, Târgovişte?).<sup>268</sup> Certain data indicated that Radu had negotiated with one envoy sent by King Matthias Corvinus the right of Wallachian merchants to carry goods to Oradea, where they could leave them one month or more, being able to recuperate them in case they were not sold out. It was a first step towards surpassing the obstacles to free access for Wallachian merchants on Transylvanian markets.<sup>269</sup> Neagoe Basarab took this even further, imposing new limitations on the freedom to travel in Wallachia for Braşov merchants. They were warned that, in case they did not give up their staple right, they would be forced to sell or purchase goods only in Câmpulung, Târgovişte and Târgşor, that were in their turn granted staple right. In letters that survived to this day, the prince hints that he would cancel this measure, only if it allowed his merchants free passage through

<sup>266</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 178–179.

<sup>267</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 183–191.

<sup>268</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 95, doc. LXXIV; p. 98, doc. LXXVI.

<sup>269</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 108, doc. LXXXIII.

Transylvania, in Oradea, Cluj, or Timișoara.<sup>270</sup> The townspeople of Brașov did not exactly take kindly to these measures: they attacked and killed several merchants in Wallachia.<sup>271</sup> Calm was restored during the reign of Neagoe's heir, Teodosie. The rulers that followed were not as consistent in defending the rights of their merchants, and returned to the so-called "old law."<sup>272</sup>

Along with Brașov, Sibiu also enjoyed a trade privilege granted by King Louis in 1351, which allowed its inhabitants to carry merchandise all throughout the kingdom.<sup>273</sup> In 1382, the same king granted the town staple right, foreign merchants being forbidden to carry the goods not sold in Sibiu to Wallachia.<sup>274</sup> As with Brașov, no document was kept to confirm the staple right of Sibiu against merchants coming from the south. This obligation was, however, imposed. As customs records show, the market of Sibiu saw townspeople from nearby centres: Râmnic and Argeș, but also merchants from Câmpulung, Târgoviște, Slatina, Pitești, Bucharest and Craiova. In 1500, the merchants from Argeș were the most active: 71 merchants had acquired over 600000 dinars from sales in Sibiu; Râmnic was second with transactions over 350000 dinars; Câmpulung was next, with over 210000 dinars.<sup>275</sup> No information on the existence of a privileged customs treatment for the merchants of Sibiu who brought goods into Wallachia exists.

Trade with Brașov and Sibiu was part of a much larger economic circuit which not only involved Wallachia, but the entire south-eastern Europe, spreading to the centre and the north of the continent. This was the trade with the Eastern world, where Transylvania and the Romanian Principalities acted as intermediaries.<sup>276</sup> Economic relations from Central Europe—Eastern world were largely unchanged. Only the beneficiaries and those in control of trade routes changed regularly. Until the 15th century, Italians had the lion's share, with

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<sup>270</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 80, doc. LXXXII.

<sup>271</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 154, doc. CLVI.

<sup>272</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 195, doc. CXCI.

<sup>273</sup> DRH, C, X, p. 100, doc. 87.

<sup>274</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 113, doc. 69; pp. 117–118, doc. 71–72; p. 120, doc. 74.

<sup>275</sup> This data indicates the customs worth of products, as recorded by customs officials: *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der Sächsischen Nation*, vol. I (Sibiu, 1880), pp. 271–322, 434, 469; Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," p. 257.

<sup>276</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, Florin Bonciu, "Considerații asupra abordării mondiale a proceselor istorico-economice," *AIIAI*, vol. XXX (1993), pp. 539–542.

the Levant merchants gradually increasing their earnings in the latter half of this century (after 1475–1484). These were the Greeks, the Turks, the Jews and the Ragusans. Sea and land routes then switched from under the control of Balkanic and Byzantine states to that of the Ottomans. These changes naturally led to a change in trade habits, specialisation on certain products, the decline of some towns and the rise of others. Until the 16th century, from Levant to Hungary and Poland, there were three main avenues where this trade was carried out, on land or at sea:

1. via the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, then on land, through Venice or the Dalmatian centres;
2. via the Black Sea, on land, then on through the Italian harbours, the towns of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania;
3. only on land, through the towns of Bulgaria, Serbia, Wallachia and Transylvania.<sup>277</sup>

In this circuit, Transylvanian and Wallachia towns were protagonists as well, benefiting from the trade. One appropriate example here: Wallachian merchants intermediating export of metal goods on Eastern markets. Styrian knives would enter the Ottoman Empire as “Wallachian knives”, pass through the markets of Skopje, Adrianople and Bursa, and finally reach Egypt via Antalya.<sup>278</sup> This commercial “chain” had Wallachian traders take knives from Austrian and Transylvanian merchants and resell them to Levantine merchants.

When approaching the south-Danubian trade scheme, we must also mention merchants from the Balkans. Those in Ragusa were encouraged to come to Bulgaria ever since 1192, when the Byzantine emperor Isaac Angelos granted them a trade privilege, ensuring full freedom to trade “in the whole of Romania and the kingdom of Bulgaria.”<sup>279</sup> Bulgarian rulers adopted and continued this policy. Ivan Asen II granted them a privilege in 1230, allowing passage to Târnovo, Vidin and Kavarna, where they could create their own trade establishments.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>277</sup> Pach, “Levantine Trade,” pp. 295–303.

<sup>278</sup> Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Nicoară Beldiceanu, “Acte du regne de Selim I concernant quelques échelles danubiennes de Valachia, de Bulgarie et de Dobrudja,” *SF*, vol. XXIII (1964), p. 94.

<sup>279</sup> Cankova-Petkova, Primov, “Dubrovnik, Byzantium and Bulgaria,” pp. 81–82.

<sup>280</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 781, doc. 638.

After reaching the river, the Ragusans came into contact with tradesmen from Wallachia.<sup>281</sup> The 1349 treaty, concluded between Ragusa and Stefan Dušan, king of the Serbs, makes an indirect reference in one of its provisions to trade with areas inhabited by the Romanians (weapons trade with Wallachia was prohibited).<sup>282</sup> The advent of Ottoman rule had no bearing on the Ragusan trade. In 1442, the Ragusans obtained a privilege from the Turks as well, allowing them to bring goods to Bulgaria and Wallachia.<sup>283</sup> In the 15th–16th centuries, they were still acting as middlemen in trade with the Eastern world or the southern Danubian area. Among others, they brought fine Bulgarian wool on the Braşov market. The letters sent by a Ragusan who lived briefly in Wallachia, Piero di Giovanni, relate his concern over seeing his merchandise delivered safely, as well as the negotiations he was engaged in to he import this product.<sup>284</sup> As Wallachia entered the Ottoman scope of influence, an ever-growing number of Turkish and Greek merchants entered the towns of the country.<sup>285</sup> Turks and Greeks rivalled local merchants and those in Braşov, who did not take kindly to this competition.<sup>286</sup>

Trade relations with Poland were only secondary in nature. In 1390, in Lublin, an alliance treaty between the representatives of Mircea the Old and those of Władysław Jagiełło was concluded, and renewed in 1391 and 1411.<sup>287</sup> Mircea gave this political deal its finishing touch by a trade privilege, granted in 1403 to merchants in Poland and Lithuania, who were allowed freedom to trade in Wallachia. The town of Târgovişte received staple right for the products they brought in, and was also the only place where the customs duty was to be collected (the *tricesima*). The ruler kept the right to be the first to choose among the goods the Polish brought in.<sup>288</sup> Another privilege, that granted the town of Lviv by Alexandru the Good in 1408, makes reference to Polish merchants who went to Brăila to buy fish or those taking pepper

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<sup>281</sup> Al. Grecu, “Relațiile Țării Românești și ale Moldovei cu Raguză (sec. XV–XVIII),” *Studii. Revista de istorie și filozofie*, vol. II, no. 4 (1949), p. 109.

<sup>282</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 125.

<sup>283</sup> Giurescu, *Țara Românească*, p. 45.

<sup>284</sup> Pall, “Relațiile comerciale,” pp. 115–120, doc. I–VII.

<sup>285</sup> Tocilescu, *534 documente*, p. 90, doc. 95.

<sup>286</sup> Tocilescu, *534 documente*, p. 340, doc. 343; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 74–78.

<sup>287</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 122, doc. 75; p. 125, doc. 78; p. 186, doc. 115.

<sup>288</sup> B. P. Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică a României*, tom I, part I (Bucharest, 1864), pp. 3–4.

and wool from Wallachia.<sup>289</sup> The Polish presence on the Wallachian markets of 1408 reveals that the opportunities that Mircea had created in 1403 had yielded results. To buy pepper on the Wallachian market, the merchants of Lviv had to make contact with other middlemen who brought it from the East, purchasing it directly from the Genovese or local merchants. In 1409, Mircea renews the privilege and acknowledges the staple right for Târgoviște. We now find out that the Polish merchants brought cloth from Flanders, but they were forbidden to import silver, required for the local coinage.<sup>290</sup> Vlad the Dragon renewed in 1439 the privilege his father had previously granted. The beneficiaries included in it are the merchants of Kraków, Lviv, from the “Russian country” (former Galician Rus’), but from Moldavia as well. The ancient privilege is modified, with limitations added to the tax exemption granted by Mircea the Old. The first customs tax they were to pay was in Râmnicul Sărat. The customs duties in other towns were added, and free access to “the land of the Turks” was also available.<sup>291</sup> Towards the end of the 15th century, Ottoman sources in Kilia and Cetatea Albă show that Wallachia exported into Poland wax, wine, marten furs, fresh or brined fish, and Poland provided cloth and fabric.<sup>292</sup> In the 16th century, the transit trade for Polish merchants through Wallachia was no longer regular, a situation which would shortly change only in the last quarter of the next century.<sup>293</sup>

Rulers of Wallachia were mindful of the economic and military importance of direct access to the Black Sea. In the latter half of Mircea the Old’s reign, until the one of Dan II, Wallachia ruled over Kilia (after 1403–1404, until 1426),<sup>294</sup> and controlled Dobruja with Silistra after 1388–1389.<sup>295</sup> Princes of Wallachia probably had control of Kilia also between 1439 and 1445/1446, with the town coming under the

<sup>289</sup> M. Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Iași 1932), p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>290</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 122; p. 419, doc. II.

<sup>291</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part 1, p. 84, doc. 108.

<sup>292</sup> Nicoară Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Etudes et actes* (Paris, 1973), pp. 127–130.

<sup>293</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 405, doc. 314; p. 430, doc. 353; p. 443, doc. 381.

<sup>294</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 361–362; P. P. Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldopolone în secolul XV și problema Chiliei,” *Romanoslavica*, vol. III (1958), pp. 98–103; Ștefan Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre (genovezi, români și tătari în spațiul pontic în secolele XIV–XVII)* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 46–48.

<sup>295</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 257–258; Năsturel, “Une victoire,” pp. 239–246.

control of John Hunyadi from 1448 on.<sup>296</sup> Rule over harbours by the Danube facilitated the access of merchants in the country to the Black Sea, and implicitly to its harbours. A Venetian report in 1462 shows that a ship belonging to “the Wallachs” had been retained in Constantinople, then released, another one being noted in Crete as well.<sup>297</sup> Many Wallachian products were shipped on the water. The customs taxes in Calafat also include the salted fish delivered “by ship.” The customs tax was 30 asprons for a ship with fish.<sup>298</sup>

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Merchants from Wallachian towns, as well as the foreign ones, brought home finer goods than those manufactured or available here: spices, pepper, saffron, ginger, cloves, etc.<sup>299</sup> These products were brought directly off the Levantine market, on the Danube and on land as well, but also off the Mediterranean market as well.<sup>300</sup> In 1382, when the staple right for Sibiu was reinstated, it was stated that foreign merchants no longer had the right to bring pepper and saffron to Wallachia, these products being brought in via the Adriatic.<sup>301</sup> Along with spices, foreign merchants brought in fine cloth, manufactured in Ypres, Bruges, Louvain, Nuremberg and Köln, French, Polish and Bohemian cloth,<sup>302</sup> fine clothes and shoes (sheepskin coat, furs, boots, fur caps, caps or hats), ropes, but also metals and metal objects (iron, swords, spears, knives or bows).<sup>303</sup> Merchants from Braşov brought copper in Wallachia as well, an imported good which was regularly prohibited by the rulers, who relied on copper mining operations at

<sup>296</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 38–42.

<sup>297</sup> Ştefan Meteş, *Relațiile comerciale ale Țării Românești cu Ardealul până în veacul al XVIII-lea* (Sighișoara, 1921), p. 13; Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. III, p. 219.

<sup>298</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 41, doc. 14.

<sup>299</sup> See Mária Pakucs, “Comerțul cu mirodenii al orașelor Braşov și Sibiu în prima jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea,” *SMIM*, vol. XX (2002), pp. 73–87.

<sup>300</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118; p. 198, doc. 120.

<sup>301</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 113, doc. 69.

<sup>302</sup> Transylvanian towns also provided Italian cloth, from Florence, Bergamo, Verona etc. (S. Goldenberg, “Comerțul, producția și consumul de postavuri de lână în țările române (sec. XIV—jumătatea sec. XVII),” *SRDI*, vol. XXIV, no. 5 (1971), p. 881).

<sup>303</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118; pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121; p. 218, doc. 134; p. 221, doc. 136.

Baia de Aramă.<sup>304</sup> Foreign merchants had no monopoly over these products, that were brought south of the Carpathians by the locals as well. They would buy and resell in the main markets of the country cloth, weapons, iron objects, clothes and horses.<sup>305</sup> The economic circuit was completed by exports from Wallachia, which included raw products, gained by working the soil, the subsoil, or animal husbandry. Among these, there were many agricultural products. Salt, first mentioned in the Hospitaller Charter (1247), was a major export, Wallachia having a wealth of salt mines within its boundaries.<sup>306</sup> As with Transylvania, the salt-selling process was under monarch control. This product did not feature in any trade privilege granted by the rulers, indicating that it was not available as such for foreign traders. In 1375, King Louis of Hungary ordered the *comes* of Timișoara to stop the salt import from Wallachia in Orșova.<sup>307</sup> The Genovese bought a lot of salt, and this was mentioned in the trade privilege they received from Ivanko of Dobruja as well.<sup>308</sup> At the customs house, salt was taxed according to its destination: salt being carried to the fords of the Danube, Turkish or “imperial.” It was carried as rock salt and grains.<sup>309</sup> Wax was another much sought product. Brașov’s staple right mentioned the right of the townspeople to collect the wax brought “from whichever part and especially from Wallachia” and which was to be melted, poured, purified, and sold in this town.<sup>310</sup> The Wallachian wax would even reach the Venice market. Bartolomeo Locadello and Petru Bakšić mention in late sources the Greek merchants in Târgoviște who brought wax every year in Venice.<sup>311</sup> The privileges granted to Brașov by Mircea the Old also include other products: wine, mead, honey, livestock, the skins of wild and tame animals, cheese, etc.<sup>312</sup> Rulers

<sup>304</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 33, doc. 14; p. 39, doc. 16; D, I, p. 286, doc. 186; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 64, doc. XLI.

<sup>305</sup> Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 40, doc. 30; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 88, doc. LXV; p. 241, doc. CCII; p. 221, doc. CLXXV; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 69, doc. 121; Iorga, *Scrisori și zapise*, p. 1, doc. I.

<sup>306</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 21–27, doc. 10; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>307</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 213, doc. 159.

<sup>308</sup> DIR, veacul XIII, XV și XV, B, p. 34, doc. 24.

<sup>309</sup> DRH, B, XXII, p. 665, doc. 353.

<sup>310</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 135, doc. 86; Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 140, doc. CXLII; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 78, doc. LIV.

<sup>311</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 35, 216.

<sup>312</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 218, doc. 134; p. 221, doc. 136; pp. 227–230, doc. 141–142; p. 276, doc. 175.

temporarily forbade the sale of certain products, such as the skins of wild beasts, that they kept as their own income.<sup>313</sup> Instead, manufacturers of sheepskin coats in Sibiu and other Transylvanian towns had gained from the king of Hungary the right for exclusive purchase and sale of raw skins imported from Wallachia.<sup>314</sup> Along with the inhabitants of Braşov, the craftsmen in Sibiu were also interested in buying indigo dye, brought from south of the mountains and used to paint cloth.<sup>315</sup>

Other products required abroad were the cereal crops. Numerous sources reveal that Genovese merchants took interest in cereals, that were collected and taken to Constantinople via the centres where they had distributors.<sup>316</sup> Forbidden to do the same, the Venetians would submit a protest in Genoa, in 1349, accusing their Black Sea rivals that they would not let them trade this product.<sup>317</sup> The Genovese obtained the cereals via the traders in Dobruja, Moldavia and Wallachia, the exchange taking place in the harbours by the Danube, Kilia, Brăila and Floci. After the Ottomans gained control over the Black Sea, Italian merchants lost the benefits brought by cereal trade, which the Levantine merchants soon availed themselves of. Grain exports were also carried on land, witness the mention made to “the sack of wheat” unit of measurement in customs taxes by the Danube, which was charged with two asprons.<sup>318</sup>

The livestock trade was very profitable, and Wallachia had plenty of animals. Laonic Chalcocondyl mentioned that, in the 1462 campaign, Ottomans had captured over 200000 horses, oxen and cattle.<sup>319</sup> This figure, although probably played up, reveals that the local population also engaged in animal husbandry. The meat was required to fill the demand on the Central and Western European markets. Livestock reached them after being handed by several middlemen. From Wallachian merchants, they were taken over by merchants in Transylvania, who sold them in the large fairs in western Hungary, where they were taken to Austria, in Vienna and Moravia. It was from here on that

<sup>313</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 108, doc. LXXXIII.

<sup>314</sup> DH, vol. II, part 3, p. 133, doc. 124.

<sup>315</sup> S. Goldenberg, S. Belu, “Postăvăritul din Braşov în secolul al XVI-lea,” *RA*, vol. X, no. 2 (1967), pp. 169–174.

<sup>316</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 66–73.

<sup>317</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>318</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 41, doc. 14.

<sup>319</sup> Laonic Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 291.



livestock entered the German market, in Regensburg and Augsburg, even reaching the Rhine-Main area.<sup>320</sup> Ever since the 15th century, the livestock demand increased in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Istanbul. 1476 sees the *Valahia* horses mentioned, brought on land in the capital of the empire.<sup>321</sup> Their purchase and transport was handled by tradesmen called *gelepi*, even more frequent after 1500 on.<sup>322</sup> Rulers would also engage in livestock trade later on. The surname borne by one of them (Mircea Ciobanul, where Ciobanul means “shepherd”) seems to originate in the animal trading he carried out while in Istanbul.<sup>323</sup> A Wallachian town, Craiova become a major livestock market in the 16th century.<sup>324</sup>

To conclude their business, some of the townspeople in Wallachia bought merchandise on trust from Turkish or Jewish merchants. They would set a debt payment term, after which they would sell the products at a higher price in Braşov or Sibiu. They would go bankrupt if they did not cover their debt, the rulers or town leaders being forced to intervene on several occasions.<sup>325</sup> Other townspeople dealt with a different sort of trade. A certain Turcul, on close terms with Rădilă of Câmpulung, would redeem prisoners from the Turks.<sup>326</sup> Other townspeople, especially Jews and Greeks, were usurers, lending money to other merchants or boyars.<sup>327</sup>

Several testimonies certify the existence of a thriving trade in the main Wallachian towns. Câmpulung’s renown, as one of the most developed centres, is also reflected in its presence in Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographia*.<sup>328</sup> Each July, this town hosted *zborul Sfântului Ilie*, a large fair that attracted merchants from all over Europe.<sup>329</sup> Târgovişte frequently came under the patronage of rulers. Mircea the Old granted it staple right for merchandise brought in by the Polish, as well as the privilege to trade freely across the country. The largest Danubian port for Wallachia was in Brăila. The decline of Vicina benefited this town,

<sup>320</sup> Pach, “The Shifting,” pp. 310–311.

<sup>321</sup> Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans*, vol. I, p. 112, doc. 36; p. 146, doc. 54.

<sup>322</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 204, doc. 216.

<sup>323</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. IV, p. 298; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 224, 226.

<sup>324</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 434, doc. 452.

<sup>325</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 266, doc. LXXVIII; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 175, doc. CXLV, p. 234, doc. CXCIV; Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 77, doc. 69.

<sup>326</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 187, doc. CLIV; p. 285, doc. CCXXX.

<sup>327</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 480, doc. 339.

<sup>328</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 504–505.

<sup>329</sup> Armbruster, *Dacoromano-Saxonica*, p. 294.

as it took over a large part of the raw products exported by the Romanian Principalities, as well as the import of goods arriving via the Black Sea. The first mention of trade with the Eastern world for Brăila can be found in Johann Schiltberger, around 1400: “there are the boats and the ships that the merchants bring merchandise (*niederlegung*) with from heathen lands.”<sup>330</sup> In this case, “heathen land” may have been the Ottoman Empire, but the Mongol khanates as well. Usage of the term *niederlegung* had Dinu C. Giurescu state as probable the existence of staple right for Eastern goods in Brăila.<sup>331</sup> This claim is not directly backed up by sources, but it does rely on tenable arguments: even today, one of the meanings of the verb *niederlegen* is that of “depositing”. Ships carrying goods from Brăila to Levant are also confirmed by other testimonies, such as that of the expedition by Walerand of Wavrin or the chronicle of Laonic Chalococondyl.<sup>332</sup> An Ottoman report addressed in 1520 to the sultan by Mevlana Kūcūk Piri, qadi of Kazanlık (Bulgaria) includes several excerpts from a customs registry. Among others, mention is made to the arrival in the harbour of Brăila of over 70 ships from the Black Sea, from Trebizonda, Caffa, Sinope, Samsun and Istanbul. The Eastern goods they brought along were sold, and cereals were loaded up in exchange. The merchants attempted to carry these through without paying the Ottoman customs duty.<sup>333</sup>

Other towns, such as Târgșor and Gherghița, were actively trading with Brașov. In the 1503 customs records, a peak year in relations with the Brașov market, the two towns feature as having transports of over 950000 asprons (Târgșor) and 400000 asprons (Gherghița). They are second and fourth to Câmpulung (the first) and Târgoviște (the third) when it comes to the amount of trade exchanges. In 1529–1530, a not so favourable year, Târgșor exceeded all other earnings per town, trading merchandise worth over 110000 asprons.<sup>334</sup> In Târgșor, the annual fair took place before Easter, as a document issued around 1533 indicates.<sup>335</sup> Râmnic was relied largely on trade with Sibiu,

<sup>330</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 30.

<sup>331</sup> Dinu C. Giurescu, “Relațiile economice ale Țării Românești cu țările Peninsulei Balcanice din secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea,” *Romanoslavica*, Istoria series, vol. XI (1965), p. 176.

<sup>332</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 85; Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 285.

<sup>333</sup> Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Beldiceanu, “Acte du regne de Selim I,” pp. 107–108.

<sup>334</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–264.

<sup>335</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 309, doc. CLXXXV.

where numerous merchants had their products entered into customs records.<sup>336</sup> Pitești was famous for the wines that the vine-clad hills around it yielded, Floci was renowned for the wool that exited the country through it, whereas Cornățel benefited from selling fish from the nearby ponds.<sup>337</sup>

Other occupations were also practiced. Although only secondary to trade, crafts were intimately connected to them. Products gained by practicing various crafts were sold, covering the food and clothing demand for townspeople and the rural population. There are several categories: craftsmen who processed harvests or meats (bakers, butchers); craftsmen specializing in processing skins and working fabrics (tailors, sheepskin makers, furriers); craftsmen skilled in processing metal and creating simple weapons (blacksmiths, farriers, bowyers), but seldom engaging in manufacturing heavy weaponry (arquebuses, cannons, etc.) or in erecting fortifications. Towns also had many potters who catered for the local demand. Argeș and Câmpulung had neighbourhoods called *Olarî* (Rom. *olar* = potter), and Floci displayed traces of several kilns.<sup>338</sup> Along with ceramics, the first crafts to develop in towns also included milling. All towns were located on riverbanks, which then had watermills, requiring the presence of craftsmen skilled in their use.<sup>339</sup>

Ever since the 15th century, different classes of artisans begin to emerge. The lack of sources does not allow us to state whether guilds existed at that point. One Laslău *protomeșter* or “head artisan” sold a vineyard in Râmnic in 1440.<sup>340</sup> His designation indicates a hierarchy among artisans in town. Some of the craftsmen originating in towns such as Argeș, Râmnic or Câmpulung, were members of the associations across the mountains. This was how “The Brotherhood of St John,” for bootmakers in Sibiu, came to include three artisans in Argeș as well (in the 1484–1499 period), and the furriers’ guild in Brașov had two artisans from Câmpulung signed up (1489–1509).<sup>341</sup>

Some townspeople had agricultural pursuits. Each town had its more or less extensive domain, and this land was used for crops or raising

<sup>336</sup> Meteș, *Relațiile comerciale*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>337</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 208–209.

<sup>338</sup> Anca Păunescu, “Cuptoare medievale de ars ceramica descoperite la Orașul de Floci, județul Ialomița,” *CA*, vol. XI, part 1 (1998–2000), pp. 175–186.

<sup>339</sup> Cernea, “Dreptul,” pp. 98–99.

<sup>340</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 158, doc. 91.

<sup>341</sup> Manolescu, “Cultura orășenească în Țara Românească,” p. 38.

livestock. These pursuits are also proven by the duties off products obtained on the domain that the townspeople owed to the prince.<sup>342</sup> Agricultural products were kept more for own use, and the fact that rulers donated few of them is proof to this.<sup>343</sup> The main agricultural pursuit for townspeople (commercial and artisan alike) was wine making and selling. In all of Central and Eastern Europe, Wallon and German colonists alike had introduced new and efficient techniques in viticulture. They can be found in Austria, then in Hungary, on the river Tisza, where they planted grapevines from the Tokaj region.<sup>344</sup> They then reach Transylvania, where the 1206 privilege granted by King Andrew II to the Saxons in Cricău, Ighiu, and Romos stated that: “not to pay anyone any donation for the vineyards they had planted.”<sup>345</sup> From here, they crossed into Wallachia and Moldavia, where they dealt with viticulture near towns. Grapevines were cultivated in the area before the Saxons had arrived, but they introduced new techniques and extended cultivated land. They had their own vineyards, as was the case of the Câmpulung Saxons, who had vineyards further south, in Topoloveni hill.<sup>346</sup> Along with the townspeople of Câmpulung, those in Târgoviște and Pitești were exempted of certain taxes for the vineyards they owned. Those in Câmpulung even had monopoly on wine selling in their town.<sup>347</sup> Wine selling was a good source of income for townspeople. The inhabitants of Brașov bought more wine from Wallachia, the privilege of 1413 setting a tax of six ducats for the cask of wine they bought.<sup>348</sup>

Research into the economy of towns generates a series of questions. Why was it especially Wallachia (as well as Moldavia) that raw goods were exported from? Have foreign merchants played an important part in the economy of Wallachian towns? Why is it that crafts are only secondary in urban economy? An explanation for these situations must be searched among the factors that influenced trade

<sup>342</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 102, doc. 52.

<sup>343</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 376, doc. 394.

<sup>344</sup> Gutkas, “Das Österreichische Städtewesen,” p. 154; *A History of Hungary*, p. 20.

<sup>345</sup> DIR, XI–XIII, C, I, p. 32, doc. 53.

<sup>346</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 278, doc. XII; Ioan Răuțescu, *Topoloveni. Monografie istorică* (Bucharest, 1939), pp. 35–36.

<sup>347</sup> DRH, B, XXV, p. 469, doc. 425; CDTR, vol. VI, p. 184, doc. 470 bis; Drăghiceanu, “O tocmeală,” p. 148; Gioglovan, “O “tocmeală” a lui Matei Basarab,” pp. 45–47.

<sup>348</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 197, doc. 120; DH, vol. II, part 2, p. 293, doc. 262.

specialization, factors that acted according to the demand for certain products on the European or Eastern markets. Following the population increase of the 14th century, but also due to better standards of living, the demand for fine cloth, furs, as well as agricultural products and spices increased. Furthermore, agriculture was the main economic branch in the Romanian Principalities, that specialized in growing cereals, grapevines and livestock, bees, etc. Benefiting from significant resources of salt, it was only natural for this wealth to be used to obtain income. A similar situation is displayed by fish. Towns did not have crafts that covered more than the local demand, so the trade in Wallachia, largely in the hands of the prince and the townspeople, relied on the products that the country had plenty of. Imports covered the demand for goods that were unavailable locally: expensive cloth, metal goods and weapons, required by the elite, the family of the ruler, the boyars and the urban patriciate, and also by the Church.

Geographic factors combined with traditional pursuits. There was an economic complementarity, both European and regional, which lasted until the 16th century.<sup>349</sup> In this process, the political factor played its part. A specialization in export on import on certain products was influenced by the privileges granted by the rulers of Wallachia, when they were vassals to the Hungarian kings. The provisions regarding merchandise also took into account supply and demand in centres in Transylvania and all across the country, as well as the interests of the authority. This was largely the case when Ottoman rule came into its own. This required a specialization on certain products, in high demand south of the Danube or officially requested by the Porte.

An explanation for the significance of foreigners in trade within towns is also given by how Wallachia was involved in the international trade circuit. The south-Carpathian area was an space of mediation between two large economic and political regions: the Byzantine Empire, continued by the Bulgarian empire, then by the Ottoman Empire (the Levantine area) and the Hungarian kingdom (the Central-European area). The Romanian-inhabited area swayed between the two, where the winds of change in politics blew. Until 1500, the Western influence had the upper hand, as proved by the fact that the wealthiest Walla-

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<sup>349</sup> Jerzy Topolski, "A Model of East-Central European Continental Commerce in the Sixteenth and the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," in *East-Central Europe in Transition*, pp. 130–139.

chian towns were at the foothills (Câmpulung, Argeş, and Târgovişte), close to the Transylvanian centres of commerce (Braşov and Sibiu). It was at that time that, vassals to the king of Hungary, the rulers of Wallachia acknowledged for merchants in Transylvanian towns rights more significant than those of their own merchants, even though they later tried to change them. The former part of the 16th century was the turning point between the two influences. In the latter half of this century, the Levantine influence prevailed. From this point on, the urban centres in Wallachia, especially those in the southern half of the country, begin having an ever-growing number of Greek, Armenian, and Jewish settlers. The significant place that foreigners held in trade and crafts does not rule out the locals. Sources document their large numbers in towns. They were involved in economic activities both locally, and abroad. The role of foreigners was important also due to delicate nature of urbanization in Wallachia. Urban density was relatively low, and in some areas towns only emerged in the 15th–16th centuries. Whereas older towns had more generous privileges, the newer ones did not enjoy the same treatment. They received the pattern of organization found in older towns in the country, but not the tax exemptions or the more extended domain rights of them. All these shattered the balance between towns, that were unable to keep up with the competition of Transylvanian towns.

In town economy, trade was the main focus, a feature specific to towns ever since they emerged. Romanian historiography was unable to avoid a debate on the main economic purpose of medieval towns: the trade focus is supported by written sources, whereas the focus on craftsmanship relies more on archaeological sources.<sup>350</sup> In our opinion the latter do not provide sufficient data to consider the production of goods as more important than trade. Crafts in towns were of local importance, their role being that of covering internal demand, the internal requirements of the rural and urban environment, their production being lacking both the quantity and the quality to be carried abroad. Raw materials were mostly prized in Wallachia, and it had plenty of them. More developed were probably the crafts related to the export of these materials, such as tanning.<sup>351</sup> We have no data, be they documentary or archaeological, which would certify until the end

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<sup>350</sup> Mircea D. Matei, *Geneza și evoluție*, pp. 112–118.

<sup>351</sup> DH, vol. II, part 3, p. 133, doc. 124.

of the 16th century the existence of workshops with a large production in Wallachia, that were involved in exporting goods. Income derived from crafts is not nearly close to the one gained by trading, where millions of asprons were handed out each year. Furthermore, documents do not note the artisans involved in buying land and houses with a high value. This situation begins to change partly at the turn of the 17th century, when the number of craftsmen mentioned in sources, as well as their economic and social role in towns increase.

The economy of Wallachian towns depended substantially on the local and international environment. The periodical struggles between the various factions of boyars in order to push their ascendants to the throne or outside attacks impacted trade negatively. Towns were dealt the heaviest blow, since they were the main target for attacks and robberies. This was where wealth and merchandise were concentrated, making them even more appealing to foreign armies. Battles at the turn of the 16th century between the rulers of Moldavia (Ștefan the Great, Bogdan III and Ștefăniță) and those of Wallachia (Radu the Handsome, Basarab the Young, Radu the Great and Radu of Afumați), impacted towns in the eastern part of Wallachia and southern Moldavia. Where Wallachia is concerned, sources mention forays led by the rulers of Moldavia in 1470 (when Brăila and Floci were set on fire), in 1471 (the battle of Soci), culminating in Ștefan the Great's raid in 1473, which resulted in the occupation of Bucharest.<sup>352</sup> Other expeditions were undertaken in 1474, 1476, 1481, 1482, 1507 and 1526.<sup>353</sup> Brăila and Floci were devastated, but also Râmnicul Sărat and the *târg* of Soci. The decline of the last one began in the first part of the 16th century.<sup>354</sup> The lives of townspeople were dramatically affected by the battles in the area, but the economy was no less altered. Sometimes, it was simple rumours that fractured trade relations with towns beyond the mountains. At one point, Vlad the Impaler sent one customs officer to Brașov, to disclaim the rumour that Turks were

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<sup>352</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 16–17, 30–31; DRH, A, II, p. 286, doc. 191; Papacostea, “Politica externă,” pp. 13–28; Laurențiu Rădvan, “Din relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Țara Românească,” in *Ștefan cel Mare la cinci secole de la moartea sa*, eds. Petronel Zahariuc, Silviu Văcaru (Iași, 2003), pp. 269–284.

<sup>353</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 17–19, 94.

<sup>354</sup> Giurescu, “Despre lupta de la Soci,” pp. 428–429; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 310–312.

making inroads into the country. One envoy from Braşov had delayed his visit in Wallachia due to this rumour.<sup>355</sup>

From the 15th century on, but especially since its latter half, the Ottoman influence increases in Wallachia. Consequences are manifold:

1. ethnic and demographic (an influx of Greeks and Jews into towns);
2. economic and territorial (merchants in the Ottoman Empire compete both with Transylvanian merchants, as well as with those in Wallachian towns); Ottoman control over settlements in the Danubian fords of Turnu and Giurgiu, and the implied control over the customs points there was a heavy loss, depriving the treasury of important income.<sup>356</sup>

The fall of Brăila, the largest town by the Danube, would play an even greater part in this turn of events. Wallachia was giving up a harbour which had been a gateway for its trade with the Eastern world. This is the backdrop against which the main trade directions begin to be gradually retraced, so the economic circuit in Southern and Eastern Europe, from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, stops being the centre piece. The bulk of international trade is shifted slowly towards the west of the continent and the Atlantic, owing to the great discoveries of the time and the economic transformations in Europe (the decrease in trade with luxury goods and an increase in the production or trade of basic items).<sup>357</sup> Towns in the Romanian Principalities will not be able to sidestep transformations brought about by the 16th century.

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<sup>355</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 454, doc. 335.

<sup>356</sup> Panăitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 401–403.

<sup>357</sup> Pach, “The Shifting,” pp. 290–303.





## CHAPTER THREE

### CASE STUDIES

#### *Argeș*

Argeș is among the oldest towns in Wallachia. It borrows its name from the river in its vicinity, that cannot however be identified beyond a doubt as the *Ordessos* in Herodotus' writings.<sup>1</sup> Since the name of the town features in Slavonic documents as *Arghiș*,<sup>2</sup> N. Drăganu suggests a Pecheneg or Cuman etymology, with the root form *arghiš* ("height").<sup>3</sup> This author believed that the origin of the name must be sought in Transylvania, where similar place names can be traced (*Mardeș*, *Ardeș*).<sup>4</sup> If we are to accept this interpretation, the name of the town would precede that of the river. In modern times, the name Curtea de Argeș became common use, this being however a form not typical of medieval documents. We owe this name change to the chancellery of the prince. Documents issued by the rulers in Argeș were seen by the clerks as being issued in the *curte* ("seat", "residence"), so the name of the town was gradually altered.<sup>5</sup>

The settlement on the upper reaches of the Argeș was host to the centre of a local state, that most historians believe was the point of origin for the unification initiative south of the Carpathians.<sup>6</sup> The oldest traces of the residence for the leader of this state are dated before 1300.<sup>7</sup> It was here that Basarab I held residence, and he was first mentioned in a document issued by the king of Hungary, Charles Robert,

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<sup>1</sup> Vasile Pârvan, *Getica, o protoistorie a Daciei*, ed. Radu Florescu (Bucharest, 1982), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> DRH, B, I, pp. 19–22, doc. 7–8; p. 80, doc. 38.

<sup>3</sup> N. Drăganu, *Românii în sec. IX–XIV pe baza toponimiei și a onomasticii* (Bucharest, 1933), pp. 530–532; N. A. Constantinescu, *Dicționar onomastic românesc* (Bucharest, 1963), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> Drăganu, *Românii*, pp. 531–532.

<sup>5</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 143, doc. 68; B, IV, pp. 149–150, doc. 118–119.

<sup>6</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, pp. 101–102; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 290–291; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 293.

<sup>7</sup> Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeș*, pp. 33, 143–147.

in 1324.<sup>8</sup> In the next year, sources hint that a conflict broke out between the voivode and the king, with Basarab being termed *sancte regis corone infidelem*.<sup>9</sup> Following Charles Robert's 1330 expedition, the stronghold in Argeș (*castrum* in the Latin documents) is laid to waste, as texts and archaeological work would reveal.<sup>10</sup> Wallachian chronicles put the beginnings of the town into their own, different perspective. Before the reign of Basarab, who is not mentioned, Radu Negru crosses from Transylvania into the area south of the Carpathians (1290). He is credited with the "foundation of the towns" of Câmpulung and Argeș, where he supposedly built the princely churches, as well as a small stronghold in Argeș.<sup>11</sup> The information relayed by chronicles confirms that only Argeș was the residence of the first rulers of the country, and not Câmpulung. The fact that Charles Robert's 1330 expedition attacked only Argeș provides one more argument to substantiate this claim. After 1340, the first stronghold here was replaced by another, with a new palace and an even more impressive church.<sup>12</sup> The entire compound covered an area of 0.76 hectares.<sup>13</sup> It was here that all rulers until Mircea the Old included were to reside; it was also here that the Metropolitan Orthodox Church of Wallachia was established in 1359.<sup>14</sup> Ever since Mircea's reign, rulers would also live in the Târgoviște seat. Johann Schiltberger visited both town-seats in 1396.<sup>15</sup> The rulers periodically resided in Argeș in the 15th century, with the palace here being rarely visited from the 16th century on.

The presence of a local ruler prior to 1290 and of the ruler of Wallachia after this time was decisive in the urbanization of the nearby settlement. We are not aware of the status of this settlement before the emergence of Wallachia was complete. Archaeological research focused on the seat of the ruler and overlooked the town, hence not

<sup>8</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 36, doc. 15.

<sup>9</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 37, doc. 16.

<sup>10</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 58, doc. 30; p. 65, doc. 35; Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeș*, pp. 56, 145–146.

<sup>11</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2; *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeș*, pp. 34–35, 143–148; *Inscripții medievale și din epoca modernă a României. Județul istoric Argeș (sec. XIV-1848)*, ed. Constantin Bălan (Bucharest, 1994), p. 249, doc. 284; Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, p. 157; A. Sacerdoțeanu, "Mormântul de la Argeș și zidirea bisericii domnești," *BCMI*, vol. XXVIII (1935), p. 5; Chihaia, *Din cetățile*, pp. 77–78.

<sup>13</sup> Constantinescu, *Curtea de Argeș*, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> DH, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 1, doc. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 30.

too many data stem from this direction. Late sources reveal that, in the first few decades of the 14th century, a group of Catholic Saxons moved into town. They were brought under the authority of the bishop of Transylvania. In 1369, Vladislav I requested them to give the proper welcome to this bishop's suffragan.<sup>16</sup> 1381 sees the creation in Argeș of the only Catholic bishopric in Wallachia, dependent on the Kalocsa Archbishopric.<sup>17</sup> It was headed by several bishops, but few acted upon their nomination in the diocese.<sup>18</sup> In the early days of the 17th century, due to a decrease in the number of Catholics, it was decided to move the seat from Argeș to Bacău, in Moldavia.<sup>19</sup> The location of the Catholic church has not been ascertained. Pavel Chihaia has two suggestions: the nowadays Botușari church or the church of St Nicholas in Târg, both a short distance from the palace.<sup>20</sup> Previous historians, like Virgil Drăghiceanu or Victor Brătulescu, believed that the church could have been located where the ruins of the Săn-Nicoară church now lie.<sup>21</sup> The belfry attached to this church would, in the Western architectural tradition, come to support this view.<sup>22</sup> The Nicoară name is not specific to Wallachia, but to Maramureș and to north-west Transylvania, so the building of this place of worship could be ascribed to inhabitants originating in this area.<sup>23</sup> What we know for certain is that in 1603 the seat of the Catholic bishopric was razed to the ground.<sup>24</sup> In 1623, Andrei Bogoslavič, without suggesting in any way an actual visit to the church, wrote that it was under the patronage of Virgin Mary and that it was plated with copper and lead. The church was apparently taken over by the Orthodox in the meantime, since only 30 Catholic households remained in town at that point, and no priest remained.<sup>25</sup> The taking over probably occurred in the latter half of the 16th century, when the Saxon group had lost importance because of the Reform. The significance and the role that this

<sup>16</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 98, doc. 56; B, I, p. 12, doc. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Auner, "Episcopia catolică," p. 439; Pascu, *Contribuții documentare*, pp. 65–67.

<sup>18</sup> Iorga, *Istoria bisericii*, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> I. C. Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1913), pp. 90–91, doc. XCI–XCIII.

<sup>20</sup> Chihaia, *Artă medievală*, pp. 151–160.

<sup>21</sup> Drăghiceanu, "Curtea domnească," p. 12; Brătulescu, *Curtea de Argeș*, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> Drăghiceanu, "Curtea domnească," p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> *Atlasul lingvistic român*, eds. Sever Pop, Emil Petrovici, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1936), map no. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 9.

community held here must not have the 16th–17th century data as a measure for their assessment, which describe it while it was already fading away or merging with the main group.

It is likely that the Saxon settlers were part of a *locatio* process, which occurred shortly after Radu Negru became ruler, in 1290. Since archaeological research certifies a local residence in Argeş before 1290, we may assume that the newcomers settled near it, but also near an older local settlement. Even though we are no longer able to identify the place where the Saxons or their church settled, fragments of the privilege they were granted, that set a specific status for them, still remain. First of all, settlers received the right to elect their own representatives, who initially had authority only over them. Later on, the privileged status was extended to the locals as well. This process had certainly concluded around 1500, when the *judet* and the *pârgari* in Argeş are mentioned.<sup>26</sup> The town had its own seal. The seal used by the community until 1500 was not kept, but only that restored during the reign of Neagoe Basarab, with a two-headed eagle.<sup>27</sup>

In a previous work, I had alleged that, both in Argeş and in Câmpulung, the ruler consented to let his townspeople have full control over the domain. Negotiations between Neagoe Basarab and the townspeople in 1512–1521 are indirect evidence to this. In other towns, the ruler saw the domain as his property that he could employ as he chose to, the inhabitants having only right to use over it. The fact that Neagoe was willing to negotiate with the townspeople, and that he also took one part from them, and gave another parcel of land in exchange shows Argeş to be a special case.<sup>28</sup> The part of the domain that the townspeople had waived, as well as the right to collect the customs duty in the marketplace were transferred to the monastery of Argeş, founded by Neagoe himself. The abusive practices of the monks were a source of discontent for the townspeople, who asked for their domain back. The process that was set in motion shortly after the reign of Neagoe lasted for over a century. The obstinacy and

<sup>26</sup> Panaitescu, *Documente slavo-române*, p. 19, doc. XI.

<sup>27</sup> Chihaiia, *Din cetățile*, p. 99.

<sup>28</sup> Laurențiu Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească până la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea* (Iași, 2004), pp. 289–291, 349–351.

the persistence in the townspeople' claims would be unjustified, if the domain were solely the property of the ruler.<sup>29</sup>

The commercial area of the town was near the court and the church of St Nicholas in Târg, named as such to distinguish it from the church of the ruler, which had the same patron.<sup>30</sup> Called a *bazar*, this part of town is only mentioned in several late documents.<sup>31</sup> Economically, Argeș focused largely on trade with Sibiu, being the first Wallachian town on the road that originated in Transylvania and crossed the valley of the river Olt and the land of Loviște. <sup>32</sup> The customs records in Sibiu include many references to merchants from Argeș. Among them, members of the town patriciate stand out, such as Dragotă and Nichifor, who traded metal goods.<sup>33</sup> Other merchants intermediated the fish trade, from the Danube to Sibiu. In 1500, merchandise worth 300000 dinars was exported from Argeș, while the imports reached 117000; merchandise worth over 200000 dinars transited the town. The town was the main trading partner for Sibiu in Wallachia, and was followed by Râmnic and Câmpulung.<sup>34</sup> Relations with Brașov were not as well developed. Statistics show that, in 1503, Câmpulung prevailed on this market, whereas Argeș was only among the last.<sup>35</sup>

The building of the monastery of Argeș near the town was not beneficial to its development. Ever since Neagoe Basarab, its founder, rulers favoured the monastery, which enjoyed many donations: right to preside over trials in the marketplace, customs house, mills, one part of the domain. Abuses occurred, and the autonomy of this community was encroached upon.<sup>36</sup>

Even though it had been one of the chief towns of Wallachia in the 14th–15th centuries, Argeș entered a slow decline from the latter half of the 16th century on. Its heyday as a country residence was to remain a thing of the past. The transfer of the metropolitan's seat to Târgoviște (1517), the impact of the Reform on the Catholic

<sup>29</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 145, doc. 131, p. 207, doc. 191, p. 221, doc. 205; Ionașcu, "Din relațiile mănăstirii," pp. 458–465.

<sup>30</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 164; Chihaia, *Artă medievală*, p. 160, 308.

<sup>31</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 73, doc. 76; DRH, B, XXII, p. 472, doc. 245.

<sup>32</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 81, doc. 140.

<sup>33</sup> Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," p. 234.

<sup>34</sup> Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," pp. 257–258.

<sup>35</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 205, 260–261; *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, vol. III (Brașov, 1896), pp. 243, 298, 303.

<sup>36</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 411, doc. 215; p. 418, doc. 218; III, p. 135, doc. 83; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 488, doc. 430.

community and the cessation of the bishopric activity (1519), the lack of attention from the rulers, a decrease in trade with Braşov and Sibiu, all these paved the way to population decrease.<sup>37</sup>

### *Brăila*

Brăila is located by the Danube, on a plateau that overlooks the left bank of the river. Ever since ancient times, the Danube had been a true continental trade road, so the location of Brăila near a ford that allowed passage into Dobruja favoured the emergence of a trading post here. A pre-14th century settlement had existed where Brăila now stands. It was probably a village inhabited by fishermen and small merchants, who sold their catch or their merchandise to the various rulers on both sides of the Danube. Since it was a field area, the eastern part of the future Wallachia was a passageway for migratory peoples over time. After 1241, the Mongols exerted their hegemony here, with the territory coming under the direct control of the rulers from Argeş mid 14th century. They created a county here, which adopted the name of the town that was its administrative centre.<sup>38</sup>

The existence of Brăila is suggested by a 1358 document, but the first certain reference to it is in the privilege granted to Braşov by Vladislav I in 1368, where it features as a customs house.<sup>39</sup> It was also claimed that Brăila and the port of *Drinago* were one of the same, the latter featuring in several portulans of the Catalan-Genovese school.<sup>40</sup> *Drinago* is noted in the 1325/1330 portulan belonging to Angellino de Dalorto, the portulan by Angelino Dulcert (probably he and Dalorto were one and the same cartographer), in 1339, *The Catalan Atlas*, in 1375, or in the portulan by Guillelmus Soleri, cca 1385.<sup>41</sup> The name *Drinago* was also inserted in a geographical account (*Libro del conoscimiento*

<sup>37</sup> *Viaţa Sfântului Nişon in Literatura română veche*, vol. I, eds. G. Mihăilă, Dan Zamfirescu (Bucharest, 1969), pp. 94–97; *Istoria Ţării Româneşti*, pp. 35–41.

<sup>38</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 330, doc. 205.

<sup>39</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39; p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>40</sup> J. Bromberg, "Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies on Medieval Dobruđja, Bessarabia and Moldo-Wallachia," *Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* (Bruxelles) vol. XII, fasc. II (1937), pp. 467–469; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoricul oraşului Brăila din cele mai vechi timpuri până astăzi* (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 43–44; Rădvan, "Contribuţii," pp. 75–85.

<sup>41</sup> *The Portolan Chart of Angellino de Dalorto, MCCCXXV*, ed. Arthur R. Hinks (London, 1929); *Sea Charts of the Early Explorers, 13th to 17th Century*, eds. Michel Mollat du Jourdin

or *The Book of Knowledge*), written in the early days of the 14th century.<sup>42</sup> *Drinago* could not have been Drina, a tributary to the Danube,<sup>43</sup> since Dalorto's map places a southern tributary of this river between *Drinago* and Buda, called *flum(en) Drinis*. It is likely that the authors of the portulans, who relied on testimonies by the Italian navigators who were familiar with the Danube, had placed Brăila in *Drinago*. The Brăila-Brillago-Brinago-Drinago evolution is not impossible. The town of Mangalia in Dobruja was noted in most portulans as *Pangala*, and in a Greek print in Venice even as *Bagalia*.<sup>44</sup> The *Brillago/Brelago* form is mostly used in travellers' journals and in 15th century maps: in a description of the Burgund expedition in 1445, written by Wallerand de Wavrin and in Fra Mauro's map of 1459.<sup>45</sup> In other 15th–16th centuries, the name of the town is featured as: *Brigala* (in Italian), *Brailova*, *Ibrail* (in Turkish) and *Proilavon* (in Greek).<sup>46</sup> The origin of the name must be sought in an anthroponym.<sup>47</sup>

In 1358, King Louis of Hungary allowed the merchants in Braşov free passage through a land south of the Carpathians, that he laid claim to. The eastern borders of this territory were delineated by the flow of the Siret and the Ialomiţa rivers into the Danube.<sup>48</sup> Since the town of Floci was near the mouth of the Ialomiţa, and Brăila near the mouth of the Siret, the two limits are mentioned in reference to those settlements, which already acted as trading posts and harbours.<sup>49</sup>

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et al. (Fribourg, 1984), p. 201, maps 7 and 9; *Choix de documents géographiques conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. L. Delisle (Paris, 1883).

<sup>42</sup> *Book of the Knowledge of all the Kingdoms, Lands and Lordships that are in the World, and the Arms and Devices of Each Land and Lordship, or of the Kings and Lords who Possess Them*, ed. Clements Markham (London, 1912).

<sup>43</sup> Andrei Pippidi, "De l'utopie à la géographie: une 'Roumanie' au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *RRH*, vol. XXV, no. 1–2 (1986), p. 71; Silvia Baraschi, "Numele oraşului Brăila în sursele medievale (secolele XIV–XV)," *Istros* (Brăila) vol. V (1987), p. 225.

<sup>44</sup> Petre Ş. Năsturel, "Aşezarea oraşului Vicina şi ţărmlul de apus al Mării Negre în lumina unui portulan grec," *SCIV*, vol. VIII, no. 1–4 (1957), p. 297.

<sup>45</sup> *Il mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, vol. II, eds. Tullia Gasparini Leporace, Roberto Almagia (Roma, 1956), pl. XXIX; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 83.

<sup>46</sup> Baraschi, "Numele," p. 224.

<sup>47</sup> Constantinescu, *Dicţionar onomastic*, pp. 213–214; Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, p. 138; Giurescu, *Istoricul oraşului Brăila*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>48</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39.

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Deletant suggests that Brăila could have been a part of the Hungarian route in southern Moldavia, which came under temporary Wallachian control (Dennis Deletant, "Genoese, Tatars and Rumanians at the Mouth of the Danube in the Fourteenth Century," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 62, no. 4 (1984), pp. 527–528).



The document issued by Vladislav I in 1368 takes us from the shifting realm of hypothesis onto the solid ground of certainties. The note made to Brăila in this privilege reveals that the town was already under the authority of the Wallachian ruler. This document also indicated the roads where tradesmen from Braşov were exempted of customs duties. The main route that they were to follow was the road that crossed Bran, Câmpulung, Târgovişte, which borrowed its name from its end-point by the Danube: *via Braylan*.<sup>50</sup> The form of this name shows at least several decades of existence for this settlement. If it had been recently founded, the road would have had another name. Even the path this road takes shows that the settlement was well developed at that time. Most roads followed closely the river valleys, whereas this one breaks away from the valley of the Buzău and crossed the fields to reach the Danube. In an opposite scenario, where the road would have determined the location of the town, the latter would have been further north, at the mouth of the Siret. In 1368, the town was already integrated in the tax system of the country, since a customs house existed here. The privilege was beneficial for the settlement, which kept on developing.

We are not aware whether Brăila had reached town status mid-14th century, but it definitely had pre-urban status, confirmed by archaeological excavations as well. Research in the past decades have revealed that exchanges were a common practice even before 1300 in areas south and north of the Danube. Several treasure troves of Byzantine or Mongol origin were uncovered in this area, confirming that the coins circulated on both riverbanks. Diggings also revealed that the area close to the high terrace of the Danube had been inhabited in the 14th–16th centuries, where no less than three Christian necropolises had been discovered, probably served by as many churches.<sup>51</sup>

Brăila's development as the main Wallachian harbour was favoured by the fall of Vicina, a significant trade center by the Lower Danube. The location of this town is controversial. Portulans place it after *Dri-nago*, close to where the river flowed into the sea, south of the main waterway.<sup>52</sup> Speculating on the maps of the time, most historians

<sup>50</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>51</sup> Ionel Căndea, "Geneza oraşului medieval Brăila," *Analele Brăilei*, new series, vol. I, no. 1 (1993), pp. 26–29; Ionel Căndea, *Brăila, origini și evoluție până la jumătatea secolului al XVI-lea* (Brăila, 1995), pp. 73–102.

<sup>52</sup> *The Portolan Chart; Sea Charts*, p. 201, maps 7 and 9.

believed it was in Isaccea.<sup>53</sup> Gh. I. Brătianu is inclined to place it in Mahmudia,<sup>54</sup> while Petre Diaconu claims that Vicina was probably in the Păciul lui Soare island.<sup>55</sup> A settlement by the name of *Pacui* is noted on Fra Mauro's chart (1459), being placed opposite *Duracam* (Siliștra?).<sup>56</sup> The last theory belongs to Octavian Iliescu, who believes it was located somewhere in the Hârșova-Topalu area.<sup>57</sup> A Byzantine possession at the turn of the 14th century, Vicina went into a slow decline afterwards.<sup>58</sup> A document issued in 1337–1338 claims that it was ruled over by “infamous heathens,” probably Mongols or Turks.<sup>59</sup> Another document, issued shortly after this one, noted the rise and fall in the hierarchy of Metropolitan sees for Vicina, since “it is plagued by barbarians and has few Christian inhabitants.”<sup>60</sup> In 1359, metropolitan Iachint moved his see to Argeș with the consent of the Constantinople Patriarchate, an obvious indication of the town's decline.<sup>61</sup> However, it does feature in the Russian list of towns drafted in the final quarter of the 14th century.<sup>62</sup> Șerban Papacostea suggests that Vicina's decline did not stem from the Mongol conquest, which had no major effect on the town, but from the war between the Genovese and Byzantines in 1351–1352. Constantinople lost, and the empire's grasp over the Danube Delta ended.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>53</sup> N. Grămadă, “Vicina,” *Codrul Cosminului* (Cernăuți) vol. I (1924), p. 26; Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Așezarea orașului Vicina,” p. 298; Giurescu, *Istoricul orașului Brăila*, p. 36; Michel Balard, “Les ports du Bas-Danube au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Les pouvoirs central et les villes en Europe de l'Est et du Sud-Est du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle aux débuts de la révolution industrielle. Les villes portuaires* (Sofia, 1985), p. 152.

<sup>54</sup> Gh. I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă* (Bucharest, 1935), pp. 88–92; Gh. I. Brătianu, *Vicina II. Nouvelles recherches sur l'histoire et la toponymie médiévales du littoral roumain de la Mer Noire* (Bucharest, 1940), pp. 22–27.

<sup>55</sup> Petre Diaconu, “Despre localizarea Vicinei,” *Pontica*, vol. III (1971), pp. 287–291.

<sup>56</sup> *Il mappamondo*, vol. II, pl. XXIX.

<sup>57</sup> Octavian Iliescu, “Nouvelles contributions à la géographie historique a la Mer Noire,” *Il Mar Nero*, vol. I (1994), pp. 231–236.

<sup>58</sup> In 1249–1250, Vicina became one of the metropolitan churches subjected to Constantinople (DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 5, doc. 2).

<sup>59</sup> DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 12, doc. 6; M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, “L'expédition d'Umur beg d'Aydin aux bouches du Danube (1337 ou 1338),” *Studia et acta orientalia* (Bucharest) vol. 2 (1959), pp. 13–23.

<sup>60</sup> DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 12, doc. 7.

<sup>61</sup> DIR, XIII–XV, B, pp. 13–14, doc. 9–10

<sup>62</sup> Andronic, “Orașe moldovenești,” pp. 209–215.

<sup>63</sup> Șerban Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia. Byzantins et génois aux bouches du Danube au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *RESEE*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (1978), pp. 69–78.

After coming under the rule of Wallachia, Brăila enjoyed political stability, the mainstay of economic development. This cannot be said of Vicina, which found itself in an area fraught with political unrest.<sup>64</sup> This region was scarred by the battles between the Mongols, the Bulgarians, the local rulers in Dobruja, and then the Turks, with Mircea the Old ultimately joining the conflict. After the right bank of the Danube came under one rule, that of the Ottomans, in the early 15th century, trade flourished, since a large part of the obstacles facing merchants and navigators were eliminated.<sup>65</sup>

Around 1400, Brăila had certainly attained town status. In 1396, Johann Schiltberger mentions the Brăila harbour as the place where numerous ships bearing “goods from heathen land” used to dock.<sup>66</sup> Apparently, Brăila had staple right for these goods.<sup>67</sup> The obligation that bound foreign merchants sailing the Danube from the Black Sea, that of unloading merchandise in Brăila, could also be deducted from an account of Walerand de Wavrin’s expedition (1445).<sup>68</sup> For Laonic Chalcocondyl, Brăila was “a Dacian town, where trade is more intense than in any other town in the country.”<sup>69</sup> Harbour activity was on an ever-ascending curve: in 1520, an Ottoman report mentions the arrival of some 70–80 ships in Brăila, which had departed from ports in Asia Minor or Crimea. Eastern goods were replaced by cereals.<sup>70</sup>

Brăila was also renowned for its fish trade. Polish merchants would come here to purchase it (1408), the town fishermen being mentioned in a document passed by Ștefan the Great as well.<sup>71</sup> The privileges granted to the town of Brașov in 1412–1413 also mention fish trade. While in 1368, the inhabitants of this town paid no customs duty in Brăila, one of the rulers that followed Vladislav I introduced a small money tax on fish transport. Trade with this product was too lucrative not to be taxed.<sup>72</sup> However, the Brașov merchants were not the only ones to reap the benefits of tax exemptions and reductions. Those

<sup>64</sup> DIR, XIII–XV, B, p. 11, doc. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Todorova, “River Trade,” pp. 44–45.

<sup>66</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 30.

<sup>67</sup> Giurescu “Relațiile economice,” p. 176.

<sup>68</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 85.

<sup>69</sup> Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 285.

<sup>70</sup> Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Beldiceanu, “Acte du règne de Selim I,” pp. 107–108.

<sup>71</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 282, doc. CCXXIX.

<sup>72</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118; p. 197, doc. 120; p. 218, doc. 134; p. 221, doc. 136.

from Târgoviște enjoyed them too, as did the monasteries of Cozia, Bolintin and Târgșor.<sup>73</sup>

We know very little of the community that lived in Brăila. It did have autonomy, as did other towns in the country, but no source tells us when it was granted. The *județ* and the *pârgari* are mentioned only on several occasions. They are first recorded around 1500, when they asked Brașov for “righteous law and judgement” for one inhabitant, Mihoci Latinețul, whose membership status in the community is confirmed. Mihoci was a Ragusan and he had lived in Brăila for five years. This is the only hint to the loose ethnic structure of the town.<sup>74</sup> The townspeople of Brăila are listed among those benefiting from the privilege referring to trade on the Brașov market granted to the merchants in Muntenia by Mircea the Old and renewed by Dan II.<sup>75</sup> The town probably had a domain as well, that remains undocumented. No princely residence was erected and no document issued by the rulers in town has been preserved.

But even though Brăila and its inhabitants seem lost to research, sources did not fail to record the chequered history of the town. In 1462, Mehmed II’s fleet, made up of 25 triremes and another 150 ships burned the city to the ground, after sailing the Danube.<sup>76</sup> The conflict between the rulers of Wallachia and Ștefan the Great had unfortunate effects on the development of Brăila and of Floci, situated further south. In 1470, both towns fall to the ruler of Moldavia, who lays them to waste.<sup>77</sup> A vivid account of the time, the *Cronica moldo-germană* noted that in Brăila “much blood was shed, and the town burned to the ground, not leaving even the children of mothers to live, and sliced open the breasts of mothers and ripped the children from them.”<sup>78</sup> This attack was related to the conflict between Ștefan and Radu the Handsome, the latter discontent at Kilia’s conquest by the Moldavians in 1465. Previous conflicts over the tracing of the boundary fleshed out a vast crisis in the relations between the two countries.<sup>79</sup> However, the forays of the Moldavian ruler were not only driven by political,

<sup>73</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 109, doc. 55; p. 186, doc. 106; p. 268, doc. 162; p. 448, doc. 275.

<sup>74</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 236, doc. CCXXVI.

<sup>75</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 285.

<sup>77</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 30.

<sup>79</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 93, 97; Rădvan, “Din relațiile,” pp. 269–284.

but also by economic interests, since Brăila was competition for Kilia. The fights subside after 1482–1484, when the stronghold at Crăciuna taken over by Ștefan, and Kilia is conquered by the Ottomans.<sup>80</sup> Brăila recovered, keeping its status as the main gateway to the Levant for products from Wallachia. The town was again attacked in 1512 by Bogdan III, Ștefan the Great's successor, who acted as such since a challenger to the throne of Moldavia was based in Wallachia.<sup>81</sup>

Between the summer of 1538 (date of an expedition made by Suleiman I into Moldavia) and the autumn of 1540 (when the Turks began building fortifications in Brăila), the town came under the direct rule of the Ottoman Empire. The sultan decided to organize the town and its surroundings as a *kaza*, as he had done in Giurgiu and in Turnu.<sup>82</sup> In the Ottoman administration, the *kaza* held a status unto its own, being a military and economic compound made up of one stronghold (the *kale*), where troops were stationed, a town (the *varoș*) and an agricultural area, which grouped 20–50 villages.<sup>83</sup> Some historians believe that Brăila had fallen after the military expedition led by Suleiman in Moldavia in 1538, which overthrew Petru Rareș. The new ruler, Ștefan the Locust, was forced to surrender Tighina to the Turks.<sup>84</sup> Radu Paisie was ruler of Wallachia, who accepted to surrender Brăila as well (although circumstances are unclear). The town thus joined the defensive network that the Porte had north of the Danube.<sup>85</sup> Only the discovery of new documents in Ottoman archives can clear this matter up. As one Polish account indicates (October 1540), shortly after Brăila (*civitatem magnam et opulentam*) was conquered, the Turks began erecting a stone stronghold north of the town core (*arcem muro erigendam*

<sup>80</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> Giurescu, *Istoricul orașului Brăila*, p. 67.

<sup>82</sup> Radu Perianu, "Raiaua Brăilei—noi contribuții," *RIR*, vol. XV (1945), pp. 291–296.

<sup>83</sup> The Brăila *kaza* depended on the Silistra *sandjak*. The term *raia* was used until recently in Romanian historiography in reference to lands controlled by Ottomans north of the Danube; the *raia* actually referred to a category of subjects, Christians and Muslims, who paid taxes in the Ottoman Empire (Mihai Maxim, "Teritorii românești sub administrație otomană în secolul al XVI-lea (I)," *RDI*, vol. XXXVI, no. 8 (1983), pp. 806–814).

<sup>84</sup> Ion-Radu Mircea, "Țara Românească și închinarea raielii Brăila," *Balcania* (Bucharest) vol. IV (1941), pp. 464–475; Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Beldiceanu, "Acte du regne de Selim I," p. 95.

<sup>85</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 504; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 208–211; Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. IV, p. 289; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 119.

*construere occepit*).<sup>86</sup> The fact that a fortification was built in such a short while reveals the underlying political, military, and strategic reasons for Ottoman control over Brăila. It was less dedicated to keeping a tight watch over initiatives by the rulers in Bucharest, easier to survey from Giurgiu and Turnu, but especially those of the Moldavian rulers. The political and military actions during the first reign of Petru Rareș determined the Ottoman decision to occupy Brăila along with Tighina, in order to keep the rulers in Moldavia in check. The conquest of Brăila completed the chain of Ottoman conquest north of the Danube. It was meant to oversee the river as well, turned into a vital transport venue (for troops and merchandise) as the Empire made its way towards the heart of Europe along the course of the Danube.<sup>87</sup> The economic motivation for the conquest of Brăila is only secondary, since the Empire already controlled all the customs points on the river crossings. This was harmful for Wallachia, deprived of one major harbour. The town of Floci attempted to replace Brăila.

### *Bucharest*

Bucharest is on the lower reaches of the Dâmbovița river. It developed out of a local *târg*, which emerged near a small stronghold. The first to be recorded is the fortification, referred to as *cetatea Dâmboviței*. Since the upper valley of the same river had a stronghold with the same name, this reference was not used for a long time in the Wallachian chancellery.<sup>88</sup> The name of Bucharest was finally adopted. It belonged to one of the villages near the stronghold, where the marketplace was established in the 14th century.<sup>89</sup>

Various legends attempted to attribute the foundation of the town to a shepherd called Bucur, to Radu Negru or Mircea the Old. The legend of Bucur is one among the many stories that tend to explain the birth of one settlement (usually a village), as the work of one founder,

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<sup>86</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 46, doc. XLV. Prior to 1540, a Christians necropolis was active in the stronghold area, probably close to a church (Cândea, *Geneza orașului*, pp. 27–28).

<sup>87</sup> Maxim, “Teritoriul românesc,” pp. 808–809.

<sup>88</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, pp. 56–57, doc. 96, 98.

<sup>89</sup> Drăganu, *Români*, p. 262; Constantinescu, *Dicționar onomastic*, p. 219; Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 164.

real or imaginary.<sup>90</sup> Bucur's name was associated with a church in town, which ultimately proved to be an 18th century building.<sup>91</sup> We are not aware of any real basis to a "foundation" by the prince, since ancient chronicles do not mention the town among those "made" by Radu Negru. The first few rulers of the country controlled this area ever since the dawn of the 14th century, as confirmed by Basarab I's act of erecting the monastery of Bolintin nearby.<sup>92</sup> One of Basarab's inheritors built the small stronghold in Bucharest. Archaeological research in the 1960s revealed traces of a square brick tower, with 14-metre sides, which was believed to have been built in the latter half of the 14th century.<sup>93</sup> This stronghold acted as a temporary residence for the ruler and the seat for the *pârcălab* of the Ilfov county.

The building of this stronghold hastened the development of a *târg* nearby. In the central area of the modern town, excavations uncovered numerous objects, which support the possibility that trade was practiced here.<sup>94</sup> The *târg* in Bucharest catered for the economic demands of the Ilfov-Vlașca area. Unlike the rest of the flatlands, the area where Bucharest developed was extensively populated in the 13th–15th centuries, having natural defences (forests, swamps) against outside attacks.<sup>95</sup> Even so, the *târg* in Bucharest was not considered a town from the very beginning. It is not mentioned in the privileges granted to Brașov, nor in the privilege granted to merchants in Muntenia by Mircea the Old (renewed under Dan II).<sup>96</sup> Until 1450, the *târg* in Bucharest was only important locally. The community will be granted autonomy only one century later.

Strategic reasons, as well as the development of new towns (Târgșor, Gherghița) north of the Ilfov area, crossed by the road linking

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<sup>90</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, Paul Simionescu, "Consemnări și tradiții privind întemeierea cetății de scaun a Bucureștilor," *Revista de Etnografie și Folclor* (Bucharest) vol. XIX, no. 3 (1974), pp. 190–204.

<sup>91</sup> I. Ionașcu, Vlad Zirra, "Mănăstirea Radu Vodă și biserica Bucur," in *Bucureștii de odinioară în lumina săpăturilor arheologice*, ed. I. Ionașcu (Bucharest, 1959), pp. 57, 75.

<sup>92</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 137, doc. 75; P. Ș. Năsturel, "D'un document byzantin de 1395 et de quelques monastères roumains," in *Travaux et mémoires. Hommage à M. Paul Lemerle*, vol. 8 (Paris, 1981), p. 351.

<sup>93</sup> Panait, "Cetatea Bucureștilor," p. 314.

<sup>94</sup> Panait I. Panait, "Începuturile orașului București în lumina cercetărilor arheologice," *BMIM*, vol. V (1967), p. 23.

<sup>95</sup> No less than 41 villages have been located in the present-day area of Bucharest (Donat, "Așezările omenești," p. 83).

<sup>96</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

Târgoviște to the harbour at Giurgiu, garnered the ruler's attention. In 1458, Vlad the Impaler decided to build an even larger stronghold atop the old fortification. One year later, the new stronghold in Bucharest was almost ready, its name being included for the first time in an internal document.<sup>97</sup> A moat separated it from the nearby settlement.<sup>98</sup> By this new construction, Vlad the Impaler did not intend to establish the main residence here, as some authors claim.<sup>99</sup> The fortification was part of a defense plan against the Ottomans, that Vlad had taken in 1461–1462.<sup>100</sup> From here, as well as from the monasteries in Comana and Snagov, the road leading from Turk-occupied Giurgiu was more easily watched.<sup>101</sup> Vlad spent many years of his reign in Târgoviște. In 1462, the Ottoman armies that came to overthrow him did not find him in Bucharest, but in Târgoviște.<sup>102</sup> The first ruler to reside in Bucharest was his brother and follower to the throne, Radu the Handsome, a close ally of the Turks. He and his successors sought to turn the stronghold here into a more comfortable residence.<sup>103</sup> It would be restored and extended after Ștefan the Great devastated it in 1473.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, Basarab the Young erected a church within walls, and the entire residence was reshaped to even larger size during the reign of Mircea the Shepherd.<sup>105</sup> All along the 16th century, rulers of Wallachia would alternate residences between Bucharest and Târgoviște. They tried to walk the tightrope of political balance and good relations between the Christian and the Ottoman areas. This was why the Târgoviște residence was preferred by rulers who shied away from political collaboration with the Porte, while, with small exceptions,

<sup>97</sup> Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 320, doc. CCLXI; Panait, "Cetatea Bucureștilor," p. 316; DRH, B, I, p. 203, doc. 118.

<sup>98</sup> Panait, "Cetatea Bucureștilor," p. 316; Panait I. Panait, "Evoluția perimetrului Curții Vechi în lumina descoperirilor arheologice (sec. XVI–XVIII)," *BMIM*, vol. VIII (1971), pp. 82–83; Năsturel, "Cetatea București," p. 143.

<sup>99</sup> Berindei *Orașul București*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>100</sup> Năsturel, "Cetatea București," pp. 143–147; Stoicescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, pp. 92–96.

<sup>101</sup> Constantin Rezachevici, "Mormântul lui Vlad Țepeș—cea mai plauzibilă ipoteză," in *Inchinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel*, pp. 245–264.

<sup>102</sup> Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 289; *Cronici turcești privind țările române*, vol. I, eds. M. Guboglu, Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966), p. 67; Stoicescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, p. 113; Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, pp. 131–132.

<sup>103</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 219, doc. 128.

<sup>104</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 17.

<sup>105</sup> *Viața preacuviosului Nicodim sfințitul*, ed. Ghenadie Enăceanu (Bucharest, 1883), pp. 66–67; Panait I. Panait, "Curtea domnească din București în secolul al XVI-lea," *Buletinul monumentelor istorice*, vol. XLII, no. 2 (1973), pp. 3–9.



the Bucharest residence had rulers who favoured Ottoman-oriented politics. Ever since the latter half of the 16th century, the Bucharest residence was less used by some rulers in the summertime, the seat at Târgoviște having the benefit of a milder, healthier climate. Bucharest would come into its own as a capital barely in the latter half of the 17th century.

The regular arrival of rulers in the stronghold of Bucharest after 1462 was a turning point in the final stage of the transition process: from local *târg*, Bucharest evolved into a town. It gains economic importance and entices foreign merchants. Ever since the reign of Laiotă Basarab, Bucharest had Turkish merchants coming in.<sup>106</sup> The locals begin taking business trips even further. Around 1500, several Bucharest merchants appear on the markets in Sibiu and Braşov, where they brought fish, livestock, and skins, and bought cloth, tools, knives and clothing.<sup>107</sup> In the 16th century, they can be found all the way to Lviv and Moscow, seeking furs or other merchandise.<sup>108</sup> Bucharest enters a period of truly massive economic growth in the latter half of the 16th century, taking advantage of the gradual focus on the Ottoman Empire in Wallachia's trade. In 1583, when Franco Sivori reaches Bucharest, the town had "stores well-furnished with all fashions of goods," indicating a thriving trade.<sup>109</sup> The new importance gained by the settlement on the Dâmbovița river is also mapped in charts: Bucharest features on Martinus Behaim's *Globe* (1492) and on Wallachia's map in Mercator's *Atlas* (1594).<sup>110</sup>

The stronghold was a landmark in town, and the topography of the place was shaped around it. North of the stronghold, there was the main street (*Ulița Mare*), planked with tree trunks.<sup>111</sup> This was where merchant stores and craftsmen shops joined to create the *bazar*, the town market.<sup>112</sup> It was in this area as well that boyars begin purchasing

<sup>106</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 123, doc. XCVIII.

<sup>107</sup> *Rechnungen*, vol. I, pp. 296–297; *Quellen*, vol. III, pp. 194–213, 240–242, 297; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 205; Radu Manolescu, "Aspecte din istoria negoțului bucureștean în secolul al XVI-lea," *SRDI*, vol. XII, no. 5 (1959), pp. 48–52.

<sup>108</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 405, doc. CCCXIV; p. 430, doc. CCCLIII; p. 443, doc. CCCLXXXI.

<sup>109</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 8.

<sup>110</sup> Marin Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria cartografiei până la 1600*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1938), pp. 107, 147–148.

<sup>111</sup> *DIR*, XVI, B, V, p. 413, doc. 427; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 426.

<sup>112</sup> *DRH*, B, V, p. 291, doc. 266.

even more houses, from the 16th century on.<sup>113</sup> The town was divided into quarters, initially called *enories*, depending on the parish and the church that the inhabitants belonged to.<sup>114</sup>

There is evidence to indicate that Mircea the Shepherd granted the inhabitants a privilege (during his first reign, 1545–1552). This ruler also brought Târgul Jiului and Cornăţel to official town status. As was the case with other late towns, the Bucharest privilege included no special provisions as opposed to the usual ones for other towns. The inhabitants received the right to elect one community leader and 12 *pârgari*, who presided over trials, held the seal etc. They were granted neither tax exemptions, nor full ownership of the domain, as older towns had. The town domain was the full property of the ruler, townspeople only being allowed to use land for agriculture.<sup>115</sup> As opposed to other towns, the ruler kept numerous lands in town: the *ciutăria* (where wild animals were kept), the *jîniţa* (the grain silo), the *sulgeria* (the place where meat was stored), the garden, the baths etc.<sup>116</sup> The first known laying of boundary for the domain transferred to the townspeople for agriculture was effected during the reign of Mircea the Shepherd.<sup>117</sup> It was he as well who palisaded the town,<sup>118</sup> completely rebuilt the official residence and erected an older church here, the Annunciation Church, which would be represented on the second seal of the town.<sup>119</sup> Another hint that Mircea the Shepherd granted the privilege that allowed the community to manage itself is the *judeţ* being recorded into sources. The first document issued by a *judeţ* dates back to 1563. Until that year, there is nothing to suggest that he ever existed.<sup>120</sup> Suddenly, from this point on, sources record almost all the names of the town rulers, so we can recreate their succession (a unique

<sup>113</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 413, doc. 427; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 533, doc. 346.

<sup>114</sup> Gr. Nandriş, *Documente româneşti în limba slavă din mănăstirile Muntelui Athos, 1372–1658* (Bucharest, 1937), p. 77, doc. 12; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 476, doc. 493.

<sup>115</sup> DRH, B, XXI, p. 295, doc. 158; XXX, p. 308, doc. 253.

<sup>116</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 212, doc. 224; p. 294, doc. 307; p. 458, doc. 474; DRH, B, XXIV, p. 427, doc. 323.

<sup>117</sup> DRH, B, XXV, p. 423, doc. 377.

<sup>118</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 426.

<sup>119</sup> N. Iorga, *Inscripţii din bisericile României*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1905), pp. 260–261; *Inscripţiile medievale ale României. Oraşul Bucureşti*, vol. I, ed. Alexandru Elian (Bucharest, 1965), p. 245, doc. 106; Vîrtosu, “Despre dreptul,” p. 340.

<sup>120</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 291, doc. 266.

occurrence in Wallachia) until 1600.<sup>121</sup> The only reasonable conclusion is that this institution existed in the town for only a short while. However, the status held by inhabitants until the granting of the privilege is an issue. The community had not gained autonomy; however, post-1500 sources reveal that there was a settlement in Bucharest that, for all administrative, political, economic purposes, did have all the conditions that make up a town. Without any other information, we will go on to assume that from mid 15th century at least, the settlement belonged to the ruler. As his subjects, the inhabitants had basically the same status as the inhabitants in other towns, without being however privileged. Since they were near an important residence, they did receive certain liberties, mainly economic ones. Otherwise, we would not find them purchasing merchandise outside the country. By deciding to let the townspeople follow the pattern of other town communities and by granting the right to use land, Mircea the Shepherd practically concluded the transformation of the old *târg* into a town. This was necessary since the community here had become too loose ethnically, with Greeks and Jews coming in.<sup>122</sup> There was a risk that, if they settled in (as free men), they would increase the number of inhabitants with a different legal status, affecting the development of the town. By granting the privilege, the status was evened out and remained the same for all community members.

From this point on, all the conditions for a continued development of the town were met. Its growth is indicated by an ever-increasing number of churches being built. In a 1587 document, no less than 15 priests are included among witnesses.<sup>123</sup> The large number of churches and monasteries in the latter half of the 16th century is a marker for demographic increase. Before the devastating events in 1595, when it is destroyed by the Turks, Bucharest had around 10000 inhabitants.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Năstase, Marinescu, *Les actes roumains*, p. 21, doc. 37; p. 23, doc. 47; p. 26, doc. 59; p. 27, doc. 68–69; DRH, B, VII, p. 37, doc. 26; p. 132, doc. 100; VIII, p. 120, doc. 73; p. 173, doc. 109.

<sup>122</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 259, doc. 238; p. 291, doc. 266; *Izvoare și mărturii*, vol. I, p. 30, doc. 38; p. 34, doc. 42.

<sup>123</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 294, doc. 307.

<sup>124</sup> Ștefan Ștefănescu, *Demografia, dimensiune a istoriei* (Timișoara, 1974), pp. 122–129.

*Buzău*

The town of Buzău emerged on the middle reaches of the river bearing the same name. After World War I, the origin of this name gave cause for heated debate, especially between Vasile Pârvan and P. Papahagi. The former scholar initially believed that Buzău can be identified with *Mouseos*, a river mentioned in sources regarding the death of Saint Sabbas the Goth, following the persecutions of Athanasius against Christians (372).<sup>125</sup> Papahagi claimed instead a Romanian origin for the name Buzău, an anthroponym, Buză sau Buzea, rooted in *budz*.<sup>126</sup> Pârvan retorted that *budz* and “buză” (“lip”) are derived from the Thracian language, and from there on adopted into Romanian.<sup>127</sup> Still, it is difficult to identify Buzău with ancient *Mouseos*, given the scarce sources at hand.<sup>128</sup>

In most internal documents, the name of Buzău features as *Târ-gul Buzăului*, which was likely the initial name of the settlement.<sup>129</sup> Inhabitants of Buzău are first mentioned in an acknowledgement of the privilege granted to merchants in Muntenia by Dan II. Since the privilege was in force since Mircea the Old’s reign, we will assume that the settlement acted as a town ever since his time.<sup>130</sup> Rulers issued less documents from Buzău. We have no information on any residences existing in town. Archaeological excavations have close to never been performed, so the status of the settlement before 1400 is unknown. By that same token, the lack of sources for colonists does not allow us to ascribe any role to them in the urbanization process. Since no other data exists, we are forced to accept that the town evolved from a local marketplace. Buzău is among the Wallachian towns built in the contact area between the plains (Wallachian Plain) and the hills

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<sup>125</sup> Vasile Pârvan, *Contribuții epigrafice la istoria creștinismului daco-roman*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 2000), pp. 175–176; a similar opinion in Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 281.

<sup>126</sup> P. Papahagi, “Buzău,” *Analele Dobrogei* (Constanța) vol. IV, no. 3 (1923), pp. 338–344.

<sup>127</sup> V. Pârvan, “Buzăul,” *Analele Dobrogei* (Constanța) vol. IV, no. 4 (1923), pp. 47–48; Drăganu, *Românii*, pp. 248–249; Constantinescu, *Dicționar onomastic*, p. 226.

<sup>128</sup> Based on Saint Basil the Great’s letters, Pârvan determined that Saint Sabbas preached left of the Danube; the Buzău—*Mouseos* link is based on the transformation of B into M in the letters in point (Pârvan, *Contribuții*, p. 176).

<sup>129</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 188, doc. 91; III, p. 330, doc. 197.

<sup>130</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

(Subcarpații Buzăului). Its location allowed it to draw people from both areas, who came here to exchange goods. Since it borrowed its name from the river Buzău, it probably acted as a market for its valley and was the centre for a political formation before the foundation of Wallachia. In the county of Buzău, which had its residence in this town, there was an important group of boyars, whose representatives were very much present on the political stage of the 15th–16th centuries. With their support, several rulers attempted to reach or even reached the throne.<sup>131</sup>

The development of this town was also spurred on by its location near a major crossroads. It was here that the following roads met: the one coming directly from Brașov, on the Buzău river valley; the main path of the Brașov road, that crossed Câmpulung and Târgoviște, and headed to Brăila from Buzău on; the main road towards Moldavia.<sup>132</sup> The latter was travelled by Moldavian and Polish traders with merchandise. Due to internal political stability in the 14th century, the Buzău settlement grew, and its inhabitants received a privilege from one of the rulers prior to Mircea the Old's reign, or from Mircea himself.<sup>133</sup> The first mention made to the *judet* and the *pârgari* only dates back to the 16th century.<sup>134</sup> The town had gained enough fame ever since the 15th century. It features on Nicolaus Germanus' map (1466) bearing the name *Boza*, and on the map of Central Europe in the atlas printed in Ulm (1482).<sup>135</sup> Another confirmation of the urban status for Buzău is the establishment of a bishopric see here, founded during Radu the Great's reign (1495–1508), following certain reforms directed at the church.<sup>136</sup>

Its location, at the crossroads of two Transylvanian roads, favoured Buzău's trade with towns across the mountains. As intermediaries between them and the Danubian centres, the merchants in Buzău

<sup>131</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 42; *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 37–38, 45; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, p. 186.

<sup>132</sup> Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 98, doc. LXXVI; DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39; p. 86, doc. 46; Binder, "Drumurile," pp. 209–211.

<sup>133</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, pp. 3–4; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 419, doc. II.

<sup>134</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 11, doc. 9.

<sup>135</sup> Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria*, p. 98; Marin Popescu-Spineni, *România în izvoare geografice și cartografice. Din antichitate și până în pragul veacului nostru* (Bucharest, 1978), p. 115.

<sup>136</sup> *Viața Sfântului Nișon*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1944), p. 83; DRH, B, II, p. 454, doc. 242.

brought fish to Braşov.<sup>137</sup> In 1503, they were recorded as having brought goods worth over 210000 asprons into Braşov, placing it on the fifth place among Wallachian towns trading there.<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, the inhabitants of Braşov came to Buzău to buy livestock, skins, wax, wool and other goods brought and sold in town by the peasants of the area or collected off them by merchants in Buzău.<sup>139</sup>

Data on the town community in Buzău will only be available in the 16th century, when several Greeks settle in town.<sup>140</sup> A group of Gypsies lived on the outskirts, and were dependent on the bishopric.<sup>141</sup> The commercial core of the town was a marketplace, located a short distance from the bishopric, where the main streets crossed. Following an increase in Eastern influence, the marketplace was called a *bazar* from the latter half of the 16th century on (1575).<sup>142</sup> The annual fair was held between the town marketplace and the mill area on the river on the 24th of June. From the 16th century on, the lower part of the town develops an extended trade area, *Târgul de Jos*.<sup>143</sup>

Foreign travellers described the town as a vast one, with mostly wooden houses.<sup>144</sup> The main buildings in town were churches. The second place of worship, after the bishopric church, was the monastery of Banu, erected in the southern outskirts by members of the Cantacuzenus family.<sup>145</sup> The presence of the bishopric and Banu monastery affected the town autonomy. The two begin buying even more plots of land, houses and mills in town.<sup>146</sup> The lands they owned began hindering the town expansion, the inhabitants being forced to encroach on their ownership rights in order to build their houses.<sup>147</sup>

Sultan Mehmed II retreated via Buzău from Wallachia in 1462, after a failed attempt of overthrowing Vlad the Impaler in 1462. Battle

<sup>137</sup> *Quellen*, vol. III, pp. 189–202, 236–245; Manolescu, *Comerţul*, pp. 204–205.

<sup>138</sup> Manolescu, *Comerţul*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>139</sup> Meteş, *Relaţiile comerciale*, p. 12.

<sup>140</sup> Ion I. Şucu, “O seamă de documente medievale inedite din Ţara Românească (I),” *SMIM*, vol. IX (1978), p. 161, doc. 21.

<sup>141</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 315, doc. 190.

<sup>142</sup> DIR, XVII, B, IV, p. 375, doc. 384; DRH, B, VII, p. 323, doc. 236.

<sup>143</sup> DIR, XVII, B, IV, p. 367, doc. 377.

<sup>144</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 294.

<sup>145</sup> DIR, XVII, B, IV, p. 157, doc. 169; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicţionar al marilor dregători din Ţara Românească şi Moldova, sec. XIV–XVII* (Bucharest, 1971), p. 41.

<sup>146</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 456, doc. 471; VI, p. 34, doc. 41; DRH, B, XI, p. 81, doc. 59; p. 131, doc. 96.

<sup>147</sup> Dimitrie Gh. Ionescu, “Lupta oraşenilor din Buzău cu Episcopia (1550–1850),” *SAI*, vol. VIII (1966), pp. 86–89; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 100, doc. 53.

was waged around the town, that the Ottoman sources describe, as they were used to, as an overwhelming Turkish victory.<sup>148</sup> The attempts of challengers native from Buzău to ascend to the throne took their toll on this part of the country. After the failure by Dragomir the Monk to claim the throne, Mehmed beg sent armies that pillaged the county and the town of Buzău, destroying houses and enslaving many (1522).<sup>149</sup> Each time, the town recovered and pushed on.

### *Câmpulung*

The town of Câmpulung was a more special case, since it preserved until the dawn of modern times a much more extended autonomy, as opposed to other towns. The name of the settlement does not only indicate a body of land, a long field between two heights, but also a political dimension. The *Câmp* was a territorial unit which spread over several villages, present in both Maramureş and Moldavia.<sup>150</sup> It was in this type of *câmp* that the Wallachian town of Câmpulung developed. Although present in many forms, the name of the town translates the same designation, that of “long field”: *Longo Campo* or *Campo Longo* in Latin; *Langenau* or *Langnaw* in German; *Hosszúmező* in Hungarian; *Dlăgopole* in Slavonic. In the 15th century, it had become one of the major towns in the country: it features in a list of centres that dispatched delegates to the council of the Catholic church in Constance (1415).<sup>151</sup> It is also pinpointed on Fra Mauro’s map on the St Michael church wall in Murano (1459) as *Capolongo*.<sup>152</sup>

A decisive point in its evolution was its location near an older settlement of Saxon colonists who arrived from Transylvania (the latter half of the 13th century). The traces left by Saxons in Câmpulung are undeniable. The oldest record of the town dates back to 1300, the year when Laurentius, the *comes* of the Câmpulung Saxons, passes away.<sup>153</sup> This figure could only be the one coordinating the colonisation pro-

<sup>148</sup> *Cronici turceşti*, vol. I, pp. 69–70; Andreescu, *Vlad Ţepeş*, pp. 133–134.

<sup>149</sup> Căndea, “Letopiseţul Ţării Româneşti,” p. 683.

<sup>150</sup> Popa, *Ţara Maramureşului*, pp. 72–73, 156–158; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 37–39.

<sup>151</sup> Karadža, “Delegaţii,” pp. 82–83.

<sup>152</sup> *Il mappamondo*, vol. II, pl. XXIX şi XXXV.

<sup>153</sup> Binder, “Din nou despre,” p. 185; Lăzărescu, “Despre piatra de mormânt,” pp. 125–126.

cess, or a member of the family that oversaw it. The topography and the town privilege show that the colonists settled in following a *locatio*. The valley they took residence in determined the newcomers to adopt the elongated shape in the town outline, with two approximately parallel streets. The central marketplace of the town was located in the southern part, towards the Prince's Church of St Nicholas, whereas further west, near the St Elijah Church, the annual fair was held.<sup>154</sup> In Câmpulung, the decisive role played by settlers in urbanization is revealed by the fact that their plots are in the centre of the future town. The other inhabitants lived on the outskirts, as the presence of Orthodox churches erected in the 14th–15th centuries reveals. Each group had its own status, but only the settlers had special standing in the beginning. The privilege it received was modelled on similar documents issued to the Transylvanian Saxons. In Câmpulung, the leader of the community was initially a *comes* who was replaced by a *judet* (probably in the 14th century), elected by the townspeople. He had the right to judge, based on a specific custom that probably contained elements of German law which applied in Transylvanian towns as well. Colonists were given the right to full ownership over both parcels in town, and those on the domain. No other social category was allowed to own land except for the townspeople. The last provision features in the *Andreanum* as well (1224).<sup>155</sup> We cannot tell whether the tax exemptions had been granted from the very beginning. However, we cannot rule out another possibility, that of the community initially receiving the right to pay the money it owed the ruler in a single amount. Later acknowledgements show that townspeople did not pay the grain duty, the market duty, the bread duty in the annual fair held in town, and also had their vineyard duties reduced and did not work for the ruler.

Wallachian chronicles and privilege acknowledgements relay two dates for the “foundation of the town”:

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<sup>154</sup> Gheorghiu, Radoslav, “Spațiul central,” pp. 154–173; Carmen Oprescu, “Rolul instituțiilor ecleziastice în geneza și evoluția orașului Câmpulung Muscel,” *HU*, vol. VIII, no. 1–2 (2000), pp. 130–134; *Atlas istoric al orașelor din România*, series B, *Țara Românească*, fasc. 2, *Câmpulung. Städtegeschichteatlas Rumäniens*, Reihe B, *Walachei*, 2. *Lan-genau*. ed. Dan Dumitru Iacob (Bucharest, 2008), pp. VI–VII, maps IV, VI.

<sup>155</sup> DIR, veacul XI, XII, XIII, C, I, p. 210, doc. 157.



1. chronicles date this event back to the arrival of Radu Negru from Transylvania, in 1290;<sup>156</sup> only one Arab version of the chronicle places the “conquest” by Radu Negru in 1292;<sup>157</sup>
2. among privileges, the oldest one is considered to be the one granted by Radu Negru in 1291/1292.<sup>158</sup>

Since the two dates are close, they probably capture a sequence of real events in the 1290–1292 interval: the crossing of the mountains by Radu Negru, his enthronement as ruler of Wallachia, the granting of privileges for settlers and the *implantation* of new settlements in Câmpulung and Argeș. In early 14th century, a change in leadership for Wallachia occurs: Radu Negru is overthrown or replaced by Basarab I. The latter associated his son Nicolae Alexandru as co-ruler and Nicolae begins erecting a stronghold in Câmpulung, where he resided part of his reign.<sup>159</sup>

Only the church survived in the old princely residence in Câmpulung, which would become a monastery in the 17th century. Archaeological research pointed to the existence of 14th century walls near the church, as well as that of a eight-nine metre wide earth slope reinforced by a palisade, with a moat outside it, separating the compound from the rest of the town.<sup>160</sup> The slope surrounded both the palace of the ruler, as well as the church, but they had different yards.<sup>161</sup>

When colonists arrived in Câmpulung, there was already a local settlement here. In the 14th century, the Romanians were grouped north of the Catholic area, around the Orthodox Church of Valea, the oldest in the area. The lack of any ample archaeological research discourages us from claiming that the locals had previously inhabited the Saxon area. Originally, Romanians did not have the same legal standing as the colonists, the status of the two communities being merged at an unknown date. In the 15th century, this process was finished,

<sup>156</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 2; *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>157</sup> Căndea, “Letopisețul Țării Românești,” pp. 673–681.

<sup>158</sup> Răuțescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, p. 361; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; XXV, p. 262, doc. 250 și p. 468, doc. 424.

<sup>159</sup> DIR, XVII, B, III, p. 265, doc. 236.

<sup>160</sup> Gh. I. Cantacuzino et al., “Principalele rezultate ale cercetărilor arheologice la ansamblul fostei curți domnești din Câmpulung din anii 1975–1977,” *Studii și comunicări* (Câmpulung-Muscel) 1981, pp. 24–25; *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2000* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 64–65; *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2001* (Bucharest, 2002), pp. 95–97.

<sup>161</sup> *Istoria politică și geografică*, p. 176; Cantacuzino, “Principalele rezultate,” p. 28.

witness the building of Orthodox churches closer to the Catholic area (Bradu, St Nicholas, St Elijah) and the fact that some Romanians were appointed *judet*.<sup>162</sup>

Other two groups with a distinct status were the Bogomil Bulgarians and the *mișei*. The former are not mentioned as Bulgarians, but only as *șchei*, a name given by Romanians to populations arriving from south of the Danube. A larger group had settled in the outskirts, north of the Romanian neighbourhood. Until mid 16th century, they had been accepted in the town community, their neighbourhood being first mentioned in a 1561 document.<sup>163</sup> Another group settled on the south-western outskirts. The fact that there were Bogomils among them is confirmed by archaeological discoveries in the Schei neighbourhood (north) and in the cemetery of the St George-Olari church (south-west) and the neighbouring village of Lerești (north). These discoveries revealed funeral customs uncommon for those of Orthodox faith.<sup>164</sup> They probably settled here in the 14th century. The south-west neighbourhood emerged after the princely residence was built, since the street network in this area of the town follows a radial-circular pattern, with the residence as its point of reference. Furthermore, local churches had been built in the 14th–15th centuries.<sup>165</sup> Sources also mention a group of lepers or *mișei*. They lived outside the town, on a hill to the south-west, which kept the place name *Câmpul mișeilor*.<sup>166</sup> The *mișei* had their own church and mill, unidentified, that people in the nearby village of Mățău worked to maintain. The inhabitants of this village were exempted by Radu Negru and his inheritors of all taxes.<sup>167</sup> Since the townspeople privilege prevented foreigners from owning property in town or on its domain, no other foreigners are recorded as present in 14th–16th century Câmpulung.

Even though the community had been acknowledged as self-determining even before 1300, the first mention of the town rulers dates back to the end of the 15th century.<sup>168</sup> Most older documents of the

<sup>162</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 402, doc. 209.

<sup>163</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 248, doc. 229.

<sup>164</sup> Mârțu, “Prezențe arheologice,” pp. 219–225; Cantacuzino, “Les tombes,” pp. 515–523.

<sup>165</sup> Oprescu, “Rolul instituțiilor,” p. 129.

<sup>166</sup> Aricescu, *Istoria Câmpulungului*, part II, p. 117.

<sup>167</sup> Șucu, “Contribuțiuni,” p. 144; Vătămanu, *De la începuturile*, p. 94, doc. I; p. 96, doc. II.

<sup>168</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 75, doc. 67.

town (including the privileges between 1291/1292 and 1559) were lost to the many wars that swept through the town. Shortly before 1427, the town was pillaged by the Turks. In a document issued in that year, King Sigismund demanded new indulgences for monks in the Dominican monastery of the town, since all the older ones had been lost in the attacks.<sup>169</sup> It was only after 1500 that documents issued by the *juđeți* (in Old Slavonic, Latin, German or Romanian), especially the letters exchanged with Brașov and Sibiu, were kept.<sup>170</sup> The *juđeț* would apply the town seal to the issued documents. Even though the oldest seal preserved to this day is only a 17th century one, its use (as a “townspeople’s seal”) is specifically mentioned in earlier documents.<sup>171</sup> The legend details it in Latin, just as in the case of Baia and Roman, in Moldavia. The shield is an German type, with a bird as symbol.<sup>172</sup> The phrase “the townspeople’s seal,” the Latin legend and the shield type reveal that it was initially created by and for the Saxons. This explains why the seal and the old town charters were left to the Saxons until 1700.<sup>173</sup> The *juđeț*, the *pârgari*, and the townspeople could make free use of the town domain, one of the largest in Wallachia, which lay between the rivers of Dâmbovița and Râul Doamnei. It spread over several mountains, some of them bearing the same name today.<sup>174</sup>

Câmpulung’s autonomy was reflected in the religious life of the community. Two Catholic churches functioned between the 14th–16th centuries in town (St Jacob the Great and St Elizabeth), as well as several more Orthodox ones. We are not aware of any Orthodox monastery present here. Since the community was autonomous, it did not allow any outsider to hold property rights in town.<sup>175</sup> John, archbishop of Sultanieh, indicated in a memoir written before 1409 the existence of several places of worship for the Dominicans and the Franciscans

<sup>169</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 81.

<sup>170</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 402, doc. 209; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 277, doc. 503; p. 309, doc. 568; Iorga, *Scrisori de negustori*, p. 7, doc. VII.

<sup>171</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 75, doc. 67; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 275, doc. VI.

<sup>172</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 483–491; Dogaru, *Sigiliile*, pp. 162–163, fig. 149.

<sup>173</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 292, doc. XLVII; p. 293, doc. XLIX; *Călători străini*, vol. VII, p. 460.

<sup>174</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 252, doc. 144; XXV, p. 468, doc. 424; Răuțescu, *Câmpulung-Muscel*, pp. 360, 363.

<sup>175</sup> Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 335.

in Wallachia.<sup>176</sup> The Dominicans arrived in Câmpulung, and were located in the St Elizabeth church, later called Cloșter.<sup>177</sup> The name of the church was assigned by its purpose: Cloșter is the Romanianized form of the German Kloster, “monastery”. Historians tend to date the construction of this church in the former half of the 14th century. A 1656 document, as well as the Franciscan Chronicle ascribe the building of the church to Margaret, Radu Negru’s Catholic wife, who had supposedly commanded it in 1304.<sup>178</sup> In 1385, the monastery was active. In that year, Peter Sparnau and Ulrich von Tennstädt visit town, relating that: “St Andrew’s foot is there.”<sup>179</sup> The reference to the relics of such a significant saint was connected to the miracles that had allegedly been worked here, the memory of which had been kept ever since the 17th century.<sup>180</sup> It is to this place of worship (*monasterium de Longo Campo, in Walachia, Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum*) that a letter from King Sigismund to a papal legate refers to (1427).<sup>181</sup> The church fell to ruins at the end of the 16th century and disappeared for good in the next century.<sup>182</sup>

The Catholics in town had their own administrative structure, which entailed the right to elect a priest, who served in the church of St Jacob.<sup>183</sup> At the same time, the parishioners appointed an administrator for the church estate, called *goșman* or *gocîman* (Germ. Gottesmann, Lat. *vitricus*). This official was elected annually among the town patriciate, and could be re-elected if he proved trustworthy. This institution was also present in German communities in Transylvania.<sup>184</sup> The first *goșman* documented in Câmpulung was probably Iohannes, who was called *saxonicalis ecclesiae custos*. Iohannes also features as a *generosus dominus*, as he was probably a wealthy townsman who had provided

<sup>176</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 39.

<sup>177</sup> Baș, “Restaurarea Bărăției,” pp. 9–11.

<sup>178</sup> Al. Lapedatu, “Două documente care amintesc pe Negru Vodă,” *Arhiva*, vol. XIII, no. 3–4 (1902), p. 180; Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 339.

<sup>179</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 20.

<sup>180</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 211; Lapedatu, “Două documente,” p. 180; Georgescu, “Cronica franciscanilor,” p. 341.

<sup>181</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 81.

<sup>182</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 510; vol. V, pp. 211, 266.

<sup>183</sup> See also Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 112–113, 251–252; for the Saxon church system in Câmpulung, see Al. Ciocâltan, “Biserica și organizarea bisericească a sașilor din Câmpulung,” *RI*, vol. XVII, no. 5–6 (2006), pp. 9–18.

<sup>184</sup> *Rechnungen*, p. 384; *Quellen*, vol. I, pp. 683–684, 693; vol. II, p. 8, 45; Iorga, *Istoria poporului românesc*, p. 143; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 288, doc. XXXVII; Rûsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 130–138.

for the church, this being the reason why he was buried in 1373 in St Jacob.<sup>185</sup> The number of sources regarding Saxons increases significantly in the 15th century. In 1427, Sigismund of Luxembourg intervened for Gașpar of Câmpulung, who had taken residence in Sibiu.<sup>186</sup> Some Catholic inhabitants in town went on a pilgrimage to Rome, as do Petermann and his wife, Margaret, in 1433, or Sigismund, son of Andreas Pogner. The two entered King Sigismund's service, Petermann being even granted land in Transylvania.<sup>187</sup>

Townspeople had special economic relations with the inhabitants of Brașov. Câmpulung was the closest Wallachian town to Brașov, so it was only natural that relations between the inhabitants of the two centres were well developed. There was a direct road between them, which crossed the customs houses at Dragoslavele, Rucăr and Bran.<sup>188</sup> In 1368, Câmpulung features as a customs point for merchants from beyond the mountains. More specifically, the ruler displaces tax payment in the vicinity, in Rucăr (north of the town) and in the stronghold of Dâmbovița (south).<sup>189</sup> The townspeople of Câmpulung also benefited from a privilege granted to merchants in Muntenia's towns by Mircea the Old, whereby they could freely search merchandise in Brașov.<sup>190</sup> Customs records in this town make ample mention of the merchants arriving from Câmpulung.<sup>191</sup> In 1503, the value of merchandise circulated by them through Brașov is over 1 million asprons, the highest in all Wallachia.<sup>192</sup> Other merchants traded in Sibiu.<sup>193</sup> In the 1500 customs records, Câmpulung placed third in goods exported to Sibiu, with a value of over 210000 dinars, after Argeș and Râmnic. In that same year, 47 merchants had carried goods across the mountains in 112 transports.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Anton-Maria del Chiaro Fiorentino, *Revoluțiile Valahiei*, pp. 11–12; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 390; 264; DRH, B, XXIII, p. 307, doc. 186; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 276, doc. VIII; p. 278, doc. XII.

<sup>186</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 82; DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207.

<sup>187</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 356, doc. 256; Barbu, "Pèlerinage à Roma," pp. 31–33, 38–40.

<sup>188</sup> Binder, "Drumurile," pp. 213–214.

<sup>189</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46; p. 191, doc. 118; pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121.

<sup>190</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>191</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, pp. 7–9, 32, 50, 61, 74; vol. III, pp. 192–306.

<sup>192</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>193</sup> *Rechnungen*, pp. 271–322; Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 75, doc. 67; p. 43, doc. 33.

<sup>194</sup> Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," p. 257.

Along with trade, a significant source of revenue for the townspeople was that derived from selling wine. Since the town is situated at the foothills, in an area less favourable for viticulture, the inhabitants had vineyards further south, on the hill of the town of Pitești, as well as on the hills that the villages of Văleni, Ciocănești and Topoloveni spread over. In this last village, the Saxons had their own vineyards.<sup>195</sup> The land did not belong to townspeople, but to a monastery. The monks preferred leaving the work to others, provided they paid a certain amount of money or some quantities of wine.<sup>196</sup>

In its turn, Câmpulung appealed to the merchants arriving from the country, from Transylvania, Hungary or south of the Danube. The inhabitants of Brașov would come here often, one of the most sought-after products being wax.<sup>197</sup> We should also note here that, during Neagoe Basarab's reign, Câmpulung received staple right for products brought into Wallachia by the inhabitants of Brașov. This was how the ruler responded in kind to the similar right held by Brașov, that prevented Wallachian merchants to travel to other Transylvanian towns.<sup>198</sup> In July each year, Câmpulung was the host of a grand fair, the so-called *zborul* of St Elijah, named after its holy patron.

The 16th century and its crises dealt a heavy blow to the Saxon community. The religious reform brought into town Lutheran priests, who briefly converted Catholics to the new faith. The local wars and the economic crisis determined many to leave, so 1581, when the first statistics on the town exist, there were 400 Catholics and 900 Romanian households.<sup>199</sup> Even though it was limited by prince's ordinance in the 18th century, the autonomy of the town held strong until 1831.<sup>200</sup>

### *Craiova*

Due to its name, Craiova and its history have fuelled the imagination of many scholars. One of the interpretations of the name takes us back to the word *kral*, which meant “king” in Old Slavonic (the source

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<sup>195</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 278, doc. XII; Răuțescu, *Topoloveni*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>196</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 33, doc. 17; XXV, p. 469, doc. 425.

<sup>197</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 140, doc. CXLII.

<sup>198</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 80, doc. LXXXII; p. 151, doc. CLIII.

<sup>199</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 510.

<sup>200</sup> *Istoria politică și geografică*, p. 176; Băjan, *Documente*, p. 61.

of the loan into Romanian).<sup>201</sup> N. A. Constantinescu and Ioan Pătruț believed, however, that the name of the town must not necessarily related to “king” or “prince,” since its origin as a simple proper name cannot be ruled out.<sup>202</sup> Ultimately, as another version would have it, the name is supposedly derived from another Slavonic term, *kraina*, that meant “edge” or “border county.”<sup>203</sup> Despite its late emergence, the county of Dolj around Craiova did not borrow the town name, but that of the main river that crosses it, the Jiu. It is likely that the town name is connected to its roots, but any other interpretation is futile, since no sources detailing pre-1475 Craiova are preserved.<sup>204</sup>

The emergence of a local *târg* near the river Jiu was also occasioned by its location near a crossroads. This was where the road leading to the Severin stronghold (controlled by Hungary) crossed the roads leading to the Danube, to the small harbours in Calafat and Corabia. On the last route, the old Roman stone-paved road was still in use.<sup>205</sup> In each of the above-mentioned harbours, there was a customs house, with the most significant one in Calafat, at the crossing towards Vidin.<sup>206</sup> The ruling authority also held several internal customs, along with those by the Danube: the one in Secui, south of Craiova; the one in Bistrița, on the road to Severin; the one in Vâlcan, in the mountains, on the road that crossed into Transylvania.<sup>207</sup> It was these customs houses and not the towns that represented in the 14th–15th centuries the points of authority that the ruler had west of the Olt. There is no customs house in towns, since there were no towns, officially. Until the 16th century, sources do not testify to the existence of towns in this area, except for the two on the border of Muntenia: Râmnic and Ocna Mare.

There was no customs house in Craiova either. The settlement was not under the control of the prince. Craiova falls into the category of *târgs* developed on boyar’s domains, around the house of the lord of the place. As the first mention indicates, the first known owner of the domain and settlement in Craiova is Neagoe (1475). He is frequently

<sup>201</sup> Scriban, *Dicționarul*, p. 360.

<sup>202</sup> Constantinescu, *Dicționar onomastic*, p. 252; Ioan Pătruț, *Nume de persoane și nume de locuri românești* (Bucharest, 1984), pp. 30–32.

<sup>203</sup> I. Donat, *Revelații toponimice pentru istoria neștiută a românilor* (Craiova, 1941), p. 6.

<sup>204</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 213.

<sup>205</sup> “The stone road” (DRH, B, XI, p. 421, doc. 314; *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 218; vol. IX, pp. 647–648).

<sup>206</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 104, doc. 53; p. 268, doc. 162.

<sup>207</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 401, doc. 247; p. 93, doc. 47; III, p. 76, doc. 46.

referred to as a *juþan* and participates in Laiotă Basarab's council (*juþan* Neagoe from Craiova).<sup>208</sup>

Neagoe was also a member of one of the most influential families in Oltenia, that later borrowed its name from Craiova itself, their main domain: the Craiovescus.<sup>209</sup> Even though their political advancement seems to have begun ever since Vladislav II's reign, the family was much older.<sup>210</sup> Ion Donat proved that he had owed land in Oltenia probably before Wallachia had emerged.<sup>211</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești* attempted to lend credit to the participation of boyars from Oltenia in the foundation of the country. The chronicle mentions the so-called Basarab *bans*, who initially had their residence in Severin, then in Strehăia and Craiova and who obeyed Radu Negru.<sup>212</sup> As Strehăia and Craiova were the domains of the Craiovescus for a long time, this was an indirect attempt to prove the decisive role that these boyars had in the emergence of Wallachia. It is likely that this mention comprises, along with the usual distorted facts, real components of how the local rulers west of the Olt contributed to this political process, given the autonomy in the land they inhabited. Their rise to power in mid 15th century actually refers to the access of members in this boyar family to high offices, but also to their presence around the ruler, maybe as relatives, as the above-mentioned Ion Donat believes.<sup>213</sup>

From Neagoe, the Craiova domain was passed over to his son, Barbu, who held the office of great *ban*, that ensured almost full authority over the land west of the Olt.<sup>214</sup> Since he had no inheritors, the domain was transferred from Barbu to his brother, Pârveu.<sup>215</sup> A 1589 document sheds some light on the further evolution of this settlement, whereby the fate of the Craiovescu domain is decided, since their male line had died out.<sup>216</sup> Craiova was transferred from Pârveu to his son, Neagoe Basarab, who had become prince of Wallachia in 1512. In theory, after Neagoe's demise, and the death of his son, Teodosie, the Craiova

<sup>208</sup> DRH, B, I p. 243, doc. 148.

<sup>209</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 6, doc. 2; Dan Pleșia, "Neagoe Basarab. Originea, familia și o scurtă privire asupra politicii Țării Românești la începutul veacului al XVI-lea," *Valachica* (Târgoviște) vol. I (1969), p. 60.

<sup>210</sup> Iorga, *Inscripții*, vol. I, p. 100.

<sup>211</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 39–40, 173–186.

<sup>212</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>213</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 39, 178–180.

<sup>214</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 337, doc. 212; p. 452, doc. 278; p. 468, doc. 288.

<sup>215</sup> DRH, B, II, pp. 41–43, doc. 14–15; p. 51, doc. 18.

<sup>216</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 405, doc. 420.



domain became the property of the prince (1522). In reality, the rulers that followed bequeathed the domain to some loyal members of the Craiovescu family.<sup>217</sup> In 1544, Radu Paisie donated several villages and a fourth part of Craiova to two faithful subjects, *spatar* Drăghici and great treasurer Udriște.<sup>218</sup> At the onset of Mircea the Shepherd's reign, Drăghici and Udriște fled to Transylvania; this was how the central authority regained Craiova.<sup>219</sup> Ever since the rule of Alexandru II Mircea, there are obvious signs of a change in status for Craiova. In his time, an increasing number of Craiovens are mentioned in sources.<sup>220</sup> This data, corroborated with the fact that Craiova is certified as a town in 1582, show that, in the meantime, the community here had received a privilege.<sup>221</sup> Mircea the Shepherd was most likely the one to grant it. He was a true “creator” of towns in the 16th century. He granted the privilege to the town of Bucharest, and the town Târgul Jiului also owes its emergence to him. Unfortunately, the *târg* that had existed up to then in Craiova is not featured in internal sources. The properties of the boyars, even if they were settlements that, by their economic and administrative purposes, were semi-urban, were seen as just villages by the chancellery of the ruler. Craiova was no exception to this. In 1544, it is still referred to as a village, even though the customs records in Braşov and Sibiu registered the presence of Craiovan merchants immediately after 1500.<sup>222</sup>

The *târg* catered for the demands of the boyar's residence, and also for those of nearby inhabitants. In Craiova, the core of the settlement and the market were between the old house of the boyar and the main church, with St Demetrius as its patron.<sup>223</sup> The local community was powerful enough in mid 16th century to receive from Mircea the Shepherd a privilege that allowed them to follow the administrative pattern in other towns of the country.<sup>224</sup> From this point on, the town's economy and population grow. Documents mention the thriv-

<sup>217</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 196, doc. 123.

<sup>218</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 195, doc. 159.

<sup>219</sup> Stoicescu, *Dicţionar*, pp. 56, 101.

<sup>220</sup> DRH, B, VI, p. 98, doc. 76; VII, p. 234, doc. 176; VIII, p. 13, doc. 9.

<sup>221</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 56, doc. 57.

<sup>222</sup> *Rechnungen*, p. 434, 496; *Quellen*, vol. III, p. 198.

<sup>223</sup> Virgil Drăghiceanu, “Zidurile Băniei Craiovei,” *BCMI*, vol. III (1910), pp. 192–194.

<sup>224</sup> DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 114, doc. 116.

ing livestock trade, stores donated, priests, etc.<sup>225</sup> The town would later become the second major town in the country, after Bucharest.

### *Floci*

The town of Floci developed where the Ialomița river flowed into the Danube, near a major river crossing into Dobruja. Since it was located in the lowlands, the inhabitants preferred settling on several ridges, which granted only nominal protection against possible flooding. In the 15th–16th centuries, the name of the town is noted simply as Floci, and not Orașul de Floci, as many researchers call it, who relied on a form used in the 17th–18th centuries in the chancellery.<sup>226</sup> The origin of the name is an anthroponym, Floca or Floce, a frequent nickname in the Romanian-inhabited area.<sup>227</sup>

The document issued by King Louis of Hungary in 1358 makes the first reference to a settlement that existed here.<sup>228</sup> The merchants in Brașov were granted by the king the freedom to bring goods to the point where the Ialomița joined the Danube. We suspect that a harbour or a *târg* existed at that point in this area. It would supply both merchants sailing the Danube, but also the rural area on the lower reaches of the Ialomița. The presence of townspeople in Floci in the privilege granted to the merchants in Muntenia reveals that it had attained town status at the end of the 14th century.<sup>229</sup> 15th century sources that mention the town are not too generous, so almost no facts on its evolution in this period can be retraced. We only receive the confirmation that the town had a privilege, a *pârgar* being mentioned in 1467.<sup>230</sup>

Nothing of the town of Floci remains, since it was devastated by the wars that plagued the area in the 18th century. Only archaeological excavations can still revive a picture of the medieval town. Extensive

<sup>225</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 434, doc. 452; VI, p. 63, doc. 72; DRH, B, XI, p. 269, doc. 202; Dan Simonescu, “Cronica lui Baltasar Walther despre Mihai Viteazul în raport cu cronicile interne contemporane,” *SMIM*, vol. III (1959), p. 75.

<sup>226</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 224, doc. 131; II, p. 69, doc. 29; p. 157, doc. 74.

<sup>227</sup> Mircea Ciubotaru, “Revizuirea toponimice: Târgul (Orașul) de Floci,” *Studii și cercetări de onomastică* (Craiova) vol. VI (2001), pp. 64–65.

<sup>228</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 72, doc. 39.

<sup>229</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>230</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 223, doc. 131.

research in the past three decades revealed several wooden, surface dwellings, dating back to the 16th century. Most had two relatively large rooms, heated by earthen stoves, some furnished with tiles as well. Since they were made of wood, the houses frequently fell prey to fires, a not uncommon occurrence in the Middle Ages.<sup>231</sup> One point of note is that the inhabitants rebuilt their houses on the same plot of land, following the foundations and the original footprint of the old dwelling.<sup>232</sup> Several workshops where metal and bone were processed have also been uncovered, as well as traces of a large brick building, which probably served commercial purposes.<sup>233</sup> As with other Wallachian towns, the main urban landmarks were the churches, the town marketplace, and in this case, the harbour as well. Research revealed the remains of three Orthodox churches (numbered as such: 1, 2, and 3). The oldest is no. 1, which went through several stages in its evolution from early 15th century until mid 17th. No. 2 probably belonged to a monastery compound, being erected in the latter half of the 16th century, whereas not much can be said about church no. 3.<sup>234</sup> The concentration of a rather high number of dwellings and workshops near church no. 1, close to the old bank of the Ialomița, determined archaeologists to claim that this was where the old commercial centre of the town was located.<sup>235</sup> The harbour was near the Danube and contained the customs house and the docking spot for ships.<sup>236</sup>

Rulers of Wallachia rarely resided in this town and we have no data on the existence of any palace of theirs here.<sup>237</sup> Floci was where the *pârcălab* responsible for the county of Ialomița resided.<sup>238</sup> The

<sup>231</sup> Lucian Chițescu et al., “Cercetările arheologice de la Piuia Petrii (Orașul de Floci), com. Giurgeni, jud. Ialomița,” *CA*, vol. IX (1992), pp. 97–98; Nicolae Conovici, “O locuință medievală din secolul XVI descoperită la Orașul de Floci,” *MCA* (Bucharest, 1979), pp. 419–420.

<sup>232</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2004*, 23 May 2005 <http://archweb.cimec.ro/Arheologie/cronicaCA2005/cd/index.htm> (4 November 2008).

<sup>233</sup> Radu Lungu, “Contribuții la istoria meșteșugurilor medievale în Țara Românească,” *RDI*, vol. XXXIV, no. 3 (1981), pp. 514–516; Lucian Chițescu et al., “Cercetările arheologice de la Piuia Petrii (Orașul de Floci),” *MCA* (Bucharest, 1983), pp. 484–489; Chițescu, “Cercetările arheologice,” pp. 100–104 (1992).

<sup>234</sup> Radu Lungu, “Orașul de Floci—monumente istorice,” *RMMMA*, vol. XV, no. 1 (1984), pp. 38–40; Lucian Chițescu, Anca Păunescu, Teodor Papisima, “Cercetările arheologice de la Piuia Petri (Orașul de Floci), com. Giurgeni, jud. Ialomița,” *MCA* (Bucharest, 1986), pp. 282–286.

<sup>235</sup> Chițescu, “Cercetările arheologice,” p. 104 (1992).

<sup>236</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 308, doc. 187; *Istoria politică și geografică*, pp. 38, 180.

<sup>237</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 188, doc. 153.

<sup>238</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 223, doc. 131; III, p. 308, doc. 187.

town domain belonged to the ruler, being initially very widespread. Its southern boundary had many fishing ponds, that Mircea the Old donated to his foundation in Cozia in 1392.<sup>239</sup> The town inhabitants traded fish, so they were often accused by monks of illegal trespassing on their property.<sup>240</sup> The townspeople were also accused of encroaching on the monastery's right of collecting customs duty off the catch.<sup>241</sup> The town's role in the country's economy increased after Brăila was surrendered to the Turks, in 1538–1540.<sup>242</sup> From that point on, the town was practically the only harbour-town by the Danube that Wallachia had.

### *Gherghița*

Gherghița emerged at a major crossroads, where several roads met: the one descending along the Prahova river valley, with the roads from Bucharest and Moldavia (via Buzău). Sources also make frequent mention of the road that led directly to Brașov on the Teleajen valley and had one of its end-points here. The route came only second to the route via Câmpulung.<sup>243</sup> The name of the settlement comes from a person name, a diminutive of the old form of the Gheorghe (Gherghe) name, very frequent in documents. One Gherghe was probably the founder or one of the old leaders of the settlement when it was still a village, before the 14th century.<sup>244</sup>

The official emergence of this town is not without its share of uncertainty. Along with Târgșor and Pitești, we have placed it among newer towns, emerged in the latter half of the 14th century, supported by one of the rulers of the time, who also granted the privilege. One important part in the town's development was played by Mircea the Old, the one who probably negotiated with Brașov trade freedom for merchants in the towns of Muntenia, including those in Gherghița.<sup>245</sup>

<sup>239</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 42, doc. 17; p. 63, doc. 28.

<sup>240</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 223, doc. 131.

<sup>241</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 68, doc. 29; Dan M. Iliescu, *Un vechi oraș dispărut: Cetatea de Floci* (Bucharest, 1930), pp. 30–32.

<sup>242</sup> Metes, *Relațiile comerciale*, p. 19.

<sup>243</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 310, doc. 211; B, I, p. 285, doc. 176; Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 98, doc. LXXVI; p. 286, doc. CCXXXII.

<sup>244</sup> Constantinescu, *Dicționar onomastic*, p. 65.

<sup>245</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

The town was not a county seat, and the ruler erected a residence here only in the second part of the 14th century. Statistically, the residence at Gherghița was fourth in the preferences of the rulers in the 15th–16th centuries, after Argeș, Târgoviște and Bucharest. This situation is explained by its location, in what is approximately the geographic centre of Muntenia, equidistant from both the mountains and the Danube. South of the town, towards Bucharest, there was a wild tract of land, with vast forests (Vlășia) and ponds (Snagov), with the hills rising to the north.<sup>246</sup> This provided easy access to any area in Muntenia, the settlement having strategic leverage. One fortification is mentioned in Gherghița at the end of the 16th century: Baltasar Walther's chronicle includes a reference to the "deserted stronghold" at Gherghița, but also to a battle that a Mongol leader had avoided waging with the ruler of Wallachia because of the defences in place here (*Giergicz civitate*).<sup>247</sup> We cannot rule out possible fortifications in the area, since it was transited by all the armies coming from Moldavia to Târgoviște or Bucharest. The archaeological excavations which would identify these fortifications, investigating the princely residence and the town as well, have made but little headway so far. However, they did reveal the remains of dwellings in the central marketplace, but also those of a large stone house, which is assumed to be the ruler's residence.<sup>248</sup>

Town institutions first appear at the end of the 15th century. During the reign of Vlad the Monk, the town *pârgari* testified to the ruler on the matter of a complaint by a man who claimed having been wrongfully deprived of 50 florins in Gherghița.<sup>249</sup> Later on, the *județ* represented the town in a lengthy trial with neighbouring villagers for one part of the domain. The townspeople won the trial.<sup>250</sup> Gherghița's domain remained relatively intact over time, with donations affecting it only later on. In 1712, the 1534 boundaries were still in force. By comparing the data on a 1906 map of the Gherghița's domain with those in the documents, we have assessed the original surface of the town domain to be around 6000 hectares.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>246</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 120.

<sup>247</sup> Simonescu, "Cronica," pp. 26, 84, 89–90.

<sup>248</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor 2000*, pp. 88–90.

<sup>249</sup> Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 199, doc. CLXIV.

<sup>250</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 284, doc. 175; V, p. 225, doc. 208.

<sup>251</sup> Gh. Manolescu, Gh. Codrescu, *Monografia domeniului Gherghița din județul Prahova* (Bucharest, 1906), pp. 10–11 and attached plan.

We have no data on the ethnic make-up of the community in the 15th century. There was no Catholic church in town, so the number of Saxons and Hungarians was probably insignificant. The economy of the town relied on trade with Brașov in the 15th century. Many tradesmen in Gherghița are mentioned beyond the mountains, where they would carry various goods.<sup>252</sup> In 1503, the townspeople of Gherghița were fourth (with merchandise worth 400000 asprons) among Wallachian towns on the Brașov market, after Câmpulung, Târgșor and Târgoviște.<sup>253</sup> From the 16th century on, sources also mention craftsmen.<sup>254</sup> Gherghița was also transited by the salt mined at Ghitioara.<sup>255</sup> Excavations showed that the lifestyle of the inhabitants was similar to those in other major towns of the country: surface dwellings, heating provided by tiled stoves, a rich inventory, fine ceramics, etc.<sup>256</sup> After 1500, sources certify that Greeks had settled in town. Since they dealt with trade, they amassed significant fortune and began buying land.<sup>257</sup>

The strategic position of the town and the preferences displayed by the rulers turned Gherghița into a prime target for the forays of armies that entered Wallachia. This is why it had much to suffer. It was somewhere near it that the battle between Ștefan the Great and Radu the Handsome was waged (1473), and it was through it that Ștefan reached the stronghold of the Teleajen, conquered the next year.<sup>258</sup> In 1511, around Gherghița, Vlad the Young bested Mircea, the challenger coming to claim his throne.<sup>259</sup> Several years later, in 1522, Radu of Afumați suffered a bitter defeat at the hands of Mehmed beg near Gherghița.<sup>260</sup> When Ștefăniță of Moldavia attacked Wallachia in 1526, he pillaged and set on fire all the lands that stretched towards

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<sup>252</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, p. 67; vol. III, pp. 189, 242–249, 300; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 205.

<sup>253</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>254</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 52, doc. 52.

<sup>255</sup> DRH, B, VIII, p. 131, doc. 81.

<sup>256</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 1999* (Bucharest, 2000), p. 38; *Cronica Cercetărilor 2000*, pp. 88–90.

<sup>257</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 312, doc. 326.

<sup>258</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 17, 31–32, 50, 63, 179; P. P. Panaitescu, “Ștefan cel Mare și orașul București,” *SRDI*, vol. XII, no. 5 (1959), pp. 10–14.

<sup>259</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 20.

<sup>260</sup> *Inscripțiile medievale*, p. 224, doc. 241; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Radu de la Afumați (1522–1529)* (Bucharest, 1983), p. 43.

Târgșor. Gherghița, which was in his way as well, was most likely not spared.<sup>261</sup>

### *Ocna Mare*

Eight kilometres south-west of Râmnic, the town of Ocna Mare developed. It stood near one of the largest salt mines in Romanian-inhabited areas, the largest in Wallachia. The place where salt is extracted is called an “ocnă” in Romanian. Transylvania has Ocna Sibiului, Ocna Mureș, and Moldavia, Ocna. Initially, the name of the settlement near the salt pits of Râmnic was also Ocna.<sup>262</sup> From the 16th century on, “mare” (great) is attached to it,<sup>263</sup> in order to distinguish it from a smaller salt mining settlement nearby and from Ocna Mică in Târgoviște.<sup>264</sup>

Ocna Mare became a town in the 15th century. There are signs that the settlement had gone beyond *târg* status ever since the reign of Mircea the Old (around 1402–1418), when one Anghel from Ocna donated his wealth to the monastery at Cozia. It included houses, land, and vineyards, and points to a rather influential character.<sup>265</sup> Several years later, in 1425, Voico from Ocna is witness in a donation to Cozia. Voico himself appears to be a noteworthy figure, since five *jupans*, one *pârgar* and five witnesses with foreign-sounding names accompany him.<sup>266</sup> A 1502 document tells us that there were at least two priests in the settlement.<sup>267</sup> Finally, the presence of a tailor in a 1516 document confirms that there was a town near the salt mine.<sup>268</sup> The salt mines were seen as the property of the prince, therefore, the settlement here was on his domain and had received a privilege.<sup>269</sup> The first mention made to the *județ* in Ocna Mare comes only late (1612), but the institution probably existed from the 15th century on.<sup>270</sup> Pres-

<sup>261</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 94.

<sup>262</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 62, doc. 27; p. 112, doc. 57; III, p. 319, doc. 194.

<sup>263</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 96, doc. 72; V, p. 364, doc. 326; VII, p. 74, doc. 57.

<sup>264</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 148, doc. 289; p. 411, doc. 215; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 254, doc. 239.

<sup>265</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 62, doc. 27.

<sup>266</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 112, doc. 57.

<sup>267</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 41, doc. 14.

<sup>268</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 286, doc. 146.

<sup>269</sup> See *Instituții feudale*, pp. 286, 336–337.

<sup>270</sup> DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 99, doc. 103.

ent-day information makes it impossible for us to name the ruler who granted the town its privilege.

Their organization and status separated the salt mines at Ocna Mare from neighbouring Râmnic, that they were not reliant upon.<sup>271</sup> The ruler charged an official with managing the salt operations. He was called the salt mines chamberlain (*cămărașul de la ocnă*), whose authority is explained by the fact that income derived from salt were gathered in the ruler's "chamber". It is only in the 16th–17th century that information on the work system in the salt mines is available. Along with the salt chamberlain, townspeople had the right to bring workforce in. In one trial, the town *pângari* are accused of bringing people from one monastery's village to work illegally.<sup>272</sup> They were empowered only to bring to work the serf peasants in villages around the salt mine.<sup>273</sup> The salt workers were divided into saltcutters (who would cut the lumps of salt inside the shafts),<sup>274</sup> and master lumpers (they pulled the lumps out and transported them to storage).<sup>275</sup> Many documents mention the Gypsies of some monasteries who were exempted from working in the salt mine.<sup>276</sup> But not all Gypsies were exempt: the gold-digging Gypsies of the Cozia monastery were not entitled to this liberty.<sup>277</sup> Most saltcutters were Gypsies, while serfs were tasked with pulling out the salt.<sup>278</sup> Those under punishment by the ruler also ended up here.<sup>279</sup> In Transylvania, work in the salt mines is described by Hans Derschwan, in a 1528 account.<sup>280</sup> Here, the worker who counted the salt extracted from down below was called a *magulator*, a name we will also find south of the mountains.<sup>281</sup> Wallachia, as well as Moldavia, bear the traces of German elements in the organization of mines, due to the presence of German miners here. The lack of sources does not confirm their presence in Ocna Mare, but we do know they worked in

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<sup>271</sup> Aurora Iliș, "Știri în legătură cu exploatarea sării în Țara Românească până în veacul al XVIII-lea," *SMIM*, vol. I (1956), pp. 169–179.

<sup>272</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 618, doc. 419; XXIV, p. 311, doc. 237.

<sup>273</sup> DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 8, doc. 7; IV, p. 155, doc. 167.

<sup>274</sup> DIR, XVII, B, III, p. 501, doc. 452; *Instituții feudale*, pp. 100, 337.

<sup>275</sup> *Instituții feudale*, p. 463.

<sup>276</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 32, doc. 22; XXII, p. 424, doc. 212; DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 46, doc. 50.

<sup>277</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 619, doc. 420.

<sup>278</sup> DIR, XVII, B, IV, p. 30, doc. 32.

<sup>279</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 188; DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 408, doc. 354.

<sup>280</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 262–295; vol. VI, pp. 187–188.

<sup>281</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 278.



the copper mine at Bratilov. It was here that Mircea the Old brought a Saxon expert, called Ciop Hanoș, whose investments and techniques are mentioned in a 1392 document.<sup>282</sup>

With salt as a significant source of income, the rulers donated heavily to the monasteries (usually annual amounts of salt). Mircea the Old gave Cozia an entire salt mine, and Radu the Great donated Tismana a cartful of fine salt, and another cart with 400 lumps.<sup>283</sup> The monasteries at Râncăciov and Cepturoaia were also recipients of the donations (1000 lumps and 4 carts, respectively).<sup>284</sup>

Ocna Mare's salt operations were complemented by viticulture as its second trade. The inhabitants worked their vineyards, as well as those of the Govora monastery or the bishopric at Râmnic.<sup>285</sup> The wine duty in Ocna Mare had been donated to the monastery in Bistrița, 200 pails of wine being allotted to the monastery at Iezer.<sup>286</sup> Salt operations attracted merchants and craftsmen. The former bought salt or brought the required goods and food for the workers, while the others were necessary since the salt extraction process entailed an array of tools and other systems. Râmnic, Ocna Mare's main competitor, was too close for comfort and stunted its growth.

### *Pitești*

As with all towns in Wallachia, the urbanization of Pitești proves difficult to retrace. Sources on the medieval town are few and incomplete. Its beginnings must be related to the privilege granted to Brașov by Vladislav I. Along with the customs on the "Brăila road," merchants from beyond the mountains were exempted of the Slatina customs duty, which was in force on the road connecting Turnu and Nikopol, by the Danube.<sup>287</sup> It was on this road that the town of Pitești emerged. Around 1380, the settlement was still in transition to urban stage.<sup>288</sup> It features as *Nuwestad* or *Nieuwemere* in a description of Peter Sparnau and Ulrich von Tennstädt's pilgrimage to Jerusalem (1385) and in The

<sup>282</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 33, doc. 14; p. 39, doc. 16.

<sup>283</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 98, doc. 49; p. 450, doc. 276.

<sup>284</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 96, doc. 72; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 166, doc. 165.

<sup>285</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 411, doc. 252; p. 433, doc. 268.

<sup>286</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 364, doc. 326; XXIV, p. 145, doc. 110.

<sup>287</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>288</sup> DRH, B, p. 25, doc. 9.

Itinerary of Bruges (around 1380–1390).<sup>289</sup> 1388 sees its first internal reference: Mircea the Old donated to the monastery at Cozia a mill on the Pitești domain.<sup>290</sup> Most donations made by rulers in towns consisted of mills, so this data, along with the mentions of the “new town,” would confirm that there was already a town in Pitești.<sup>291</sup> However, this cannot be claimed without any doubt, since the merchants in Pitești are not mentioned among those in Muntenia who received the privilege for trade with Brașov. Other “new towns,” such as Târgșor and Gherghița, are mentioned in this document.<sup>292</sup> Something prevented the ruler granting the privilege (probably Mircea) from adding Pitești to the list. That something was likely the lack of the privilege that acknowledged the community’s autonomy.

Archaeological research and documents in late Middle Ages open up two, very different avenues of interpretation. Excavations confirmed that the settlement is old. Fragments of ceramic of a southern Transylvanian kind were found. Experts assume that this ceramic was manufactured by a group of potters who came to Pitești before 1300.<sup>293</sup> It is then possible that a group of settlers had stopped here, after crossing from Transylvania along with those in Câmpulung and Râmnic. Unfortunately, save for these fragments, nothing reminiscent of them remains, not even the church. The missionaries travelling into Wallachia after the Reform make no mention to Pitești among Catholic towns. The old town outline includes suggestions of Transylvanian influences. The central, elongated marketplace had the church of St George at one end, and the church of St Nicholas at the other. The plots on its side follow a distribution pattern similar to that of Saxon towns in Transylvania, but also to those in Târgoviște, Baia or Botoșani: the narrow side of the plot, with the house that also acted as a store, was by the street.<sup>294</sup>

Several 1528 documents indicate that the prince did not have full control over the town. One part of it had remained property of a

<sup>289</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 19–20, 22, 24.

<sup>290</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 25, doc. 9; p. 98, doc. 49.

<sup>291</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 116–120.

<sup>292</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>293</sup> Rosetti, “Observații arheologice,” p. 69.

<sup>294</sup> Eugenia Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Pitești* (Bucharest, 1982), p. 64, 73; Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, “Centrele comerciale—spații ale genezei urbane medievale românești extracarpătice,” *Analele Brăilei*, new series, vol. I, no. 1 (1993), p. 377.

grand boyar (treasurer Oancea). During Neagoe Basarab's reign, the boyar betrayed and fled with a major amount of money belonging to the ruler. To cover the damages and punish him, Radu of Afumați seizes his wealth, including half of the Pitești "village," including the customs duty, which is transferred to a monastery.<sup>295</sup> The fact that part of this settlement is called a "village" reveals that it had a distinct legal status and was not a part of the town per se. It is hard to believe that, somewhere around 1500, a ruler had donated one part of the town to a boyar or to a monastery. This phenomenon is specific for the 18th century. We would probably have more success searching in the early days of the town, whose domain probably belonged to a local ruler. One of the 14th century princes bought or seized only part of it from him, the one with a local *târg* on it. This event occurred shortly before 1380, when Pitești is recorded as a "new town," a description which does not necessarily include the existence of a privilege for the inhabitants. The privilege was granted soon after. The first mention of the *județ* is irrelevant, since too late (1582).<sup>296</sup> We know nothing of the way the part that belonged to the boyar was organized. The fact that a customs house is mentioned shows that, economically, that settlement was superior to a village.

Another controversy has to do with how ancient the ruler's residence in this town was. Even though it was from here that the rulers issued documents from the 15th century on,<sup>297</sup> the first explicit mention made of the residence is dated 1517. In that year, the work on "the new houses in the town of Pitești," initiated by Neagoe Basarab to replace the old ones, was already finished.<sup>298</sup> Traces of this construction (still unidentified) must be searched somewhere near one of the old churches in town. Each residence of the ruler had a church which served his spiritual needs and, in many towns, this was the only building to survive. St George was one of these ancient churches. Here, traces of a necropolis dating back to the 16th century were discovered; we should not rule out a possible palace existing here.<sup>299</sup> Eugenia Greceanu believes that it was located in the southern part of town.<sup>300</sup>

<sup>295</sup> DRH, B, III, pp. 85–87, doc. 51–52; p. 90, doc. 55; DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 293, doc. 273.

<sup>296</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 73, doc. 76.

<sup>297</sup> DRH, B, p. 287, doc. 178; II, p. 116, 141, doc. 54, 67.

<sup>298</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 322, doc. 166.

<sup>299</sup> Rosetti, "Observații arheologice," p. 69.

<sup>300</sup> Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Pitești*, pp. 30–32, 66–69.

Only archaeological research can gauge the real age of the ruler's residence and allow us to determine the relation between it and the town.

The status of the townspeople community is just as little known. In the 15th century, trade with Transylvanian towns was their main occupation. Many preferred Sibiu, where, around 1500, they were the fourth largest exporter of goods from Wallachia, after the merchants from Argeș, Râmnic and Câmpulung. In that year, 22 merchants engaged in 34 transports, the value of the entire merchandise reaching 38000 dinars.<sup>301</sup> In Brașov, customs records mention them later on, after 1500.<sup>302</sup> Townspeople were renowned for the sweet wines that their surrounding vineyard yielded, their quality being also noticed by foreign travelers.<sup>303</sup> A late source indicates that those with vineyards on the Pitești hill had tax reductions for the wine they produced.<sup>304</sup> The town kept on growing after 1500. From this point on, there is evidence to suggest the gradual reorientation of townspeople towards trading with raw goods (salt, livestock, wheat and wine) south of the Danube. In a 1533 ordinance, Vlad Vintilă addressed the townspeople of Pitești, Argeș and Râmnic, asking them to inform those taking merchandise to the Danube of the customs taxes paid at the Calafat crossing.<sup>305</sup> In that period, the town begins receiving foreigners, especially Greeks.<sup>306</sup>

It was in this time as well that the vicinity with the domains of monasteries created problems for the townspeople. To the south, the former "village" of Pitești had fallen under the control of the monastery of Argeș, that the townspeople went to trial on several occasions over the decades. The matter at hand: the monks accused the townspeople of trespassing on their estate.<sup>307</sup> There were other issues with the Cotmeana monastery, which also had land south-west of the town.<sup>308</sup>

<sup>301</sup> *Rechnungen*, pp. 270–299; Manolescu, "Relațiile comerciale," p. 257.

<sup>302</sup> *Quellen*, vol. III, pp. 190–210, 241–249, 295; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 205.

<sup>303</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 208; vol. VIII, p. 374; Miron Costin, *Cronica polonă*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 217.

<sup>304</sup> Drăghiceanu, "O tocmeală," p. 148.

<sup>305</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 271, doc. 168.

<sup>306</sup> DRH, B, VI, p. 220, doc. 178.

<sup>307</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 246, doc. 154; V, p. 195, doc. 181.

<sup>308</sup> DIR, XVII, B, III, p. 170, doc. 142; IV, p. 402, doc. 416.

*Râmnic*

There are two towns called Râmnic in Wallachia, one in Oltenia, and another in Muntenia. Originally, the name of Râmnic came from the Old Slavonic word for fish: *râba*. In Romanian, *râmnic* or *râbnic* indicate a pond or a lake created on a river for the breeding of fish.<sup>309</sup> To avoid any possible confusion, the Wallachia chancellery would use the name Râmnic (or sometimes Râmnic pe Olt) for the one in eastern Oltenia and Râmnicul Sărat for that in Muntenia.<sup>310</sup> The present-day name of the town upon the Olt river is Râmnicul Vâlcea, a name which entered mainstream in modern times.

The town of Râmnic is among the oldest urban centres in Wallachia. It is first mentioned in 1388, when Mircea the Old acknowledged the control of one mill (donated by Dan I) in Râmnic for the Cozia monastery, and of one vineyard (donated under Radu I).<sup>311</sup> Only going by this document can we ascertain the town to have existed ever since the reign of Radu I. One year later, the settlement would be confirmed as a privileged town, since Mircea issues a document from “my town, called Râmnic,” using the word *varoş* for “town”.<sup>312</sup> Râmnic does not feature in chronicles of the country among the towns “made” by Radu Negru, so we assume that the ruler who granted the privilege was among those who ruled between the reigns of Radu Negru and Radu I.

One group of settlers arrived in town in its early days. The few archaeological excavations in town uncovered a medieval house, with ceramics similar to the type of Transylvanian ceramic encountered in Piteşti. The ceramics was attributed to a group of colonists that came from beyond the mountains.<sup>313</sup> They probably took residence by *locatio*, but, without relevant sources or new excavations to back it up, this remains an unconfirmed theory. We only have a few documents spread over two centuries, mentioning the presence of foreign inhabitants, who appear to be mostly German. The first ones appear ever since 1389, when the witnesses of the above-mentioned document include three bearing German and Hungarian names: Bars, Mădricea

<sup>309</sup> *Dicţionarul limbii române*, tom XI, p. 459.

<sup>310</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 42, doc. 17; p. 260, doc. 157; p. 457, doc. 280.

<sup>311</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 25, doc. 9.

<sup>312</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

<sup>313</sup> Busuioc, “O casă de orăşean,” pp. 120–129.

and Mogoș.<sup>314</sup> Inheritors of the colonists seem to weigh greatly in the 15th century communities as well. Their name is mentioned in several documents of this time: Laslău, Agăta, Demeter, Andreas etc.<sup>315</sup> The Saxons erected a church in Râmnic, which endured until mid 17th century. In 1660, the walls were all that was left of it and it was completely rebuilt in 1723.<sup>316</sup> The Saxons gradually mixed in with the Romanians. In 1581, only 20 Catholic households, 180 souls in all, remained in town, but their priest was Lutheran.<sup>317</sup> The Saxon neighbourhood was occupied by Romanians, one part of its tract of land being assimilated into the Orthodox bishopric compound, as Blasius Kleiner testifies.<sup>318</sup> Since the bishopric was north of the town, the Saxon neighbourhood probably stretched between it and the central marketplace. A triangular marketplace lingered on in the modern town centre. It followed the pattern of some Transylvanian towns, and could be ascribed to the older colonists that had settled in.<sup>319</sup> Along with the Saxons, documents also mention other ethnic groups. Around the end of the 15th century, the family of Hăcicu the Armenian in Râmnic is mentioned. He was engaged in business in Brașov.<sup>320</sup> In a thorough research on customs records in Sibiu and Brașov, Aurelian Sacerdoțenu identified, along with many Romanian names, some other that indicate possible foreign ancestry: Aromanian (Mușa, Țopa), Armenian (Sarchiz, Carabeț), Hungarian (Coloman, Șandor) or Jewish (Thobbias).<sup>321</sup> The Greeks enter the area after 1500.<sup>322</sup>

The first certain mention to town institutions dates back to the end of the 15th century, when the *județ* and the 12 *pârgari* in Râmnic

<sup>314</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 28, doc. 10.

<sup>315</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 158, doc. 91; p. 316, doc. 196; p. 411, doc. 252; *Rechnungen*, pp. 285–291, 301–309.

<sup>316</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 567, doc. 382; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 212; vol. VII, p. 129; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Bibliografia localităților și monumentelor feudale din România. I. Țara Românească (Muntenia, Oltenia și Dobrogea)*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1970), p. 540.

<sup>317</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 510.

<sup>318</sup> George Georgescu, “Cronica latină a Râmnicului din 1764,” *Verbum* (Bucharest) vol. III–IV (1992–1993), p. 249.

<sup>319</sup> Constantin Mateescu, *Memoria Râmnicului* (Bucharest, 1979), p. 32.

<sup>320</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 316, doc. 196; p. 411, doc. 252; Bogdan, *Documente private*, p. 234, doc. CXCIV.

<sup>321</sup> Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, “Originea și condițiile social-economice ale dezvoltării vechiului oraș Râmnicul Vâlcea,” in *Buridava. Studii și materiale* (Râmnicul Vâlcea, 1972), p. 47.

<sup>322</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 412, doc. 366.

confirmed the payment of a debt.<sup>323</sup> Over the next century, the *judet* features often as issuing acknowledgements or testifying.<sup>324</sup> He would apply the town seal to the documents he issued. The seal had a symbol of three characters with halos (Three Hierarchs or the Holy Trinity?).<sup>325</sup> The origin of this symbol has not been retraced.

Unfortunately, neither in Pitești, nor in Râmnic was there any actual data on the old ruler's residence kept. Such a construction existed, since the rulers issued several papers while here. Late documents include a place name that suggests the presence of a fortification, which later lent its name to a hermitage, Cetățuia: in 1605, Radu Șerban confirmed ownership of land on the town domain, in "valley of the Stronghold," and a terrain situated "beyond the stronghold" is mentioned in 1639.<sup>326</sup> The fortification was either on high ground near the town, or within it, close to one of the churches the rulers had erected. Three churches fall under this category. Two are out of the question, since they were built later on: the Annunciation Church, founded by Mircea, son of Mihnea the Mean (before 1510) and Saint Paraskevi, built by Pătrașcu the Good.<sup>327</sup> The latter of these three is the bishopric church, which we also believe was the church in the old ruler's residence. A Latin text drafted in the bishopric by demand of the Austrian authorities (1731),<sup>328</sup> as well as a list of charitable donors for the bishopric, mention a certain Bogdan Voivode as founder of the church, also brother of a Mircea Voivode and son of consort Ana.<sup>329</sup> Before 1400, only Dan I was the brother (stepbrother) of Mircea the Old and son of Ana. Two further arguments support the existence of the church bishopric on the place where the ruler's residence was:

1. the bishopric was founded at the turn of the 16th century, so when Dan erected the church (ante 1386), he had a different purpose in mind;

<sup>323</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 74, doc. 66.

<sup>324</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 302, doc. 157; IV, p. 118, doc. 90; VIII, p. 512, doc. 314.

<sup>325</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 74, doc. 66; Virtosu, "Din sigilografia," p. 497.

<sup>326</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 181, doc. 177; CDTR, IV, p. 591, doc. 1357.

<sup>327</sup> Ioan Virtosu, "Biserici de lemn și cruci de piatră din județul Râmnicul Vâlciului," *BCMI*, vol. XXVI (1933), p. 186; Stoicescu, *Bibliografia localităților*, vol. II, p. 539, 544.

<sup>328</sup> Nicolae Dobrescu, *Istoria bisericii române din Oltenia în timpul ocupațiunii austriece (1716–1739)* (Bucharest, 1906), p. 231, doc. 129; Papacostea, *Oltenia*, pp. 289–294.

<sup>329</sup> Ion Donat, "Reședințele celei de-a doua mitropolii a Țării Românești," *AO*, vol. XIV (1935), pp. 74–76.

2. the entire bishopric compound, surrounded by walls, was until the 18th century on the northern outskirts of Râmnic and barely became part of the town in this century.<sup>330</sup>

Dan I had no reason to erect a church outside town, if nothing in that place would justify the purpose for that church. This purpose was that of church for the ruler's palace. It would be later used as a bishopric, when Radu the Great decided to found one, around 1500. The bishop was accommodated in the buildings nearby.<sup>331</sup> This was not unusual at the time. A similar occurrence was noted in Moldavia, in Huși, where the ruler's church became a bishop's church. We cannot rule out the theory that a similar event happened in Buzău.

Economically, the townspeople of Râmnic were especially involved in trade with Sibiu, which was closer than Brașov. What's more, since they were in Oltenia, the townspeople are absent in the privilege granted to merchants trading with Brașov.<sup>332</sup> To cross the Carpathians into Sibiu, the townspeople of Râmnic did not follow directly the valley of the Olt river, like they do today, since no wagon road was carved into the mountain.<sup>333</sup> Instead, they would travel through the land of Loviște, crossing the Olt on the Jiblea bridge.<sup>334</sup> Another bridge was located near Râmnic, half of its income being donated to the bishopric in town.<sup>335</sup> After crossing the mountains, the merchants paid their dues in the Genune (Câineni) and Turnu Roșu customs.<sup>336</sup> In 1500, Râmnic was second after Argeș when it came to the amount and value of merchandise brought in Sibiu. The value of the products reached 358000 dinars that year, 57 merchants being involved in trade, with no less than 242 transports, more than the merchants in Argeș

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<sup>330</sup> Mihai Popescu, "Oltenia în timpul stăpânirii austriece (1718–1739)," *BCMI*, vol. XIX (1926), p. 101.

<sup>331</sup> *Viața Sfântului Nișon*, ed. Grecu, p. 83; DRH, B, III, p. 319, doc. 194.

<sup>332</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>333</sup> *Via Carolina*, the direct road from Râmnic to Sibiu, was built in the former half of the 18th century (Johann Filstich, *Tentamen historiae Vallachicae*, eds. Adolf Armbruster, Radu Constantinescu (Bucharest, 1979), p. 37.

<sup>334</sup> DRH, B, XXIII, p. 622, doc. 423.

<sup>335</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 302, doc. 157; III, p. 319, doc. 194; *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 180.

<sup>336</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 78, doc. 37; p. 240, doc. 143; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 81, doc. 140.



(229). Transports were, however, small, since the inhabitants of Argeş brought almost double the value of their merchandise.<sup>337</sup>

In Râmnic, sources mention several craftsmen as well: “head artisan” Laslău or Manta the butcher make various appearances, either selling vineyards or summoned as witnesses.<sup>338</sup> The first one’s designation suggests structure amid the craftsmen groups of the town. Other craftsmen produced cloth, of a lesser quality than that from beyond the mountains, but cheaper. The town also boasted numerous vineyards. In 1440, Laslău, Agăta and others sold several vineyards, accepting only wine in return, and not money as payment. This indicates that they were also wine traders.<sup>339</sup>

Several pieces of information on the *pârcălab* in town have been preserved. In 1507–1518, this office was held by Oprea.<sup>340</sup> He amassed wealth: he features as a witness in documents, has vineyards (and even sells a few to the ruler himself) and makes donations to monasteries.<sup>341</sup> Radu of Afumaţi sent him on business several times to Sibiu.<sup>342</sup> His name is still tied to a land owned near Râmnic (Uliţa “lui Oprea”), which would later become a neighbourhood of the town.<sup>343</sup>

As an old town, Râmnic saw many churches being built. The Catholic church may have been the main church in earlier days. Since the town was west of the Olt river, it is possible that Catholic inhabitants here were subordinated to the Catholic bishop in Severin (a bishopric created in c. 1380), but not to the one in Argeş. After the importance of the Catholic community diminished, the ruler’s foundations at Annunciation, St Paraskevi, and the bishopric became the primary churches. On a height that dominated the town from the north, the Cetăţuia hermitage was erected, whose church is traditionally dated to the 15th century.<sup>344</sup> The first monastery built near town was the monastery at Archangel (1521–1522), which would receive several domains donated by Oprea the *pârcălab* in 1535.<sup>345</sup> The monasteries at Cozia

<sup>337</sup> *Rechnungen*, pp. 285–291, 301, 309; Manolescu, “Relațiile comerciale,” p. 257.

<sup>338</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 158, doc. 91; II, p. 302, doc. 157.

<sup>339</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 158, doc. 91.

<sup>340</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 111, doc. 52; p. 324, doc. 167.

<sup>341</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 411, doc. 252; p. 430, doc. 266; p. 433, doc. 268; III, p. 360, doc. 215.

<sup>342</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 44, doc. 34; Tocilescu, *534 documente*, p. 308, doc. 311.

<sup>343</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 310, doc. 163.

<sup>344</sup> Iorga, *Inscripții*, vol. I, pp. 177–178.

<sup>345</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 360, doc. 215.

and Govora had significant influence, and they received or purchased several properties in Râmnic. At the end of Mircea's reign, Cozia already controlled a subordinate church in town (a metoch), five mills, Gypsies' colonies, one part of the neighbouring village of Ulița and another nearby domain.<sup>346</sup> The monastery at Govora had lands, mills, and a subordinate church on the Olt riverbank.<sup>347</sup>

The main event in Râmnic comes at the end of the period discussed here. This involves the killing of Radu of Afumați and of his son, Vlad, in January 1529.<sup>348</sup> As tradition has it, Radu was slain by two grand boyars in the Cetățuia hermitage, which probably contradicts historical fact. The medieval man saw the act of killing within a church an unpardonable offence, so Radu and Vlad were more likely killed in town.<sup>349</sup> The murder took deep roots in the minds of contemporaries and inheritors, often serving as reference in various documents: "from the days of voivode Radu, slain in Râmnic" etc.<sup>350</sup>

### *Râmnicul Sărat*

Râmnicul Sărat is the second town bearing the place name Râmnic. We have already pointed out that the chancellery distinguished them by calling the town in Oltenia Râmnic pe Olt, or simply Râmnic, and the one in Muntenia Râmnicul Sărat. The differences between the two names also provide the first point of reference when assessing the town's age. In 1392, the name of the Râmnic in Oltenia is first attached to the Olt river. Several years before, in 1388 and 1389, Râmnic pe Olt features simply as Râmnic.<sup>351</sup> This suggests that in the last decade of the 14th century, Râmnicul Sărat had become important enough to be noted by the scribes in the ruler's chancellery. To avoid confusing the two, they were forced to identify them by the rivers they stood on.

As with most towns in the Principalities, Râmnicul Sărat was protected from flooding, since it stood on a terrace that towered over

<sup>346</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 42, doc. 17; p. 98, doc. 49; VIII, p. 510, doc. 313.

<sup>347</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 316, doc. 196; p. 433, doc. 268; II, p. 310, doc. 163.

<sup>348</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 46; Căndea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești," p. 685.

<sup>349</sup> Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, p. 173; Căndea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești," p. 685.

<sup>350</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 216, doc. 177; V, p. 127, doc. 112.

<sup>351</sup> DRH, B, I, pp. 25–28, doc. 9–10; p. 42, doc. 17.

the western and northern edges of the nearby river valley. Even if it existed from the end of the 14th century, the settlement is first mentioned in 1439, as a customs house for merchants from Poland and Moldavia who sought fish, skins, wax, wool and others in Wallachia.<sup>352</sup> The Poles had a trade privilege granted by Mircea the Old, where Râmnicul Sărat is not mentioned (1403, 1409).<sup>353</sup> The shifting boundaries of the area are the reason for this. Until 1417–1423, the Moldavian-Wallachian boundary was further up north, on the Trotuș river. At that time, the customs duty was likely charged in Putna. Following the boundary amendments under Alexandru the Good, the boundary was displaced at only 35 kms from Râmnicul Sărat, so one of Mircea the Old's inheritors established the new customs here.<sup>354</sup>

Until it became a customs point, the settlement was a local *târg* for the merchants coming from Moldavia, who rested here, but also for the inhabitants on the nearby river valley. Situated between hills and plains, Râmnicul Sărat was among the many towns emerging in an area that favoured inter-regional exchanges, the same as Buzău, Târgoviște or Pitești. Moldavian and Wallachian chronicles detail the presence of a major settlement in Râmnicul Sărat. When describing the battles between Ștefan the Great and Radu the Handsome or Basarab the Young, chronicles also make note of the skirmishes around Râmnicul Sărat (the 1481 battle). It features in the *Letopisețul Anonim al Moldovei* and in the Arab version of the *Letopisețul Țării Românești*. The latter work even refers to it as a town.<sup>355</sup> To celebrate this battle, Ștefan built a church in Râmnicul Sărat with St Paraskevi as its patron. Two timelines can serve to date the building of this place of worship:

1. during the first part of Vlad the Monk's reign, when he and Ștefan were on good terms;<sup>356</sup>
2. during the reign of Radu the Great (1497–1504), who helped the ruler of Moldavia with a small army in his war against the Poles in 1497, as recorded by the *Letopisețul de la Putna II*.<sup>357</sup>

<sup>352</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part 1, p. 84, doc. 108.

<sup>353</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, pp. 3–4; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 419, doc. II.

<sup>354</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 19; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 93, 97.

<sup>355</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 19; Căndea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești," p. 682.

<sup>356</sup> Sergiu Iosipescu, "Vrancea, Putna și Basarabia—contribuții la evoluția frontierei sudice a Moldovei în secolele XIV–XV," in *Închinare lui Petre Ț. Năsturel*, pp. 212–213.

<sup>357</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 65, 73.

In the internal documents of Wallachia, Râmnicul Sărat is considered a town barely in 1574, as occasioned by Alexandru II Mircea passing through here.<sup>358</sup> Until 1574, no other data is preserved. The mention only confirms that Râmnicul Sărat had town status, with the institutions involved.<sup>359</sup>

Based on this information, and without any thorough archaeological excavations,<sup>360</sup> we find it difficult to retrace its evolution from *târg* to town. It was not a town under Mircea the Old, since it does not appear in the privilege granted to the merchants in Muntenia by this prince.<sup>361</sup> Its mention as a customs house in 1439 shows that the settlement was controlled by the ruler and had at least reached the pre-urban stage. A county seat was also established here, so the settlement also had an administrative purpose. The true development of the town only begins in the 16th century.<sup>362</sup>

### *Slatina*

The second town on the Olt valley, developed on a terrace on the left river bank, is Slatina. Its name comes from the Old Slavonic *slatina*, which still bears the meaning of “brackish land” in some areas.<sup>363</sup> The settlement here is first mentioned as a customs point in the privilege granted to Braşov by Vladislav I in 1368.<sup>364</sup> For the next two centuries, few sources regarding the town persisted. This can be explained by the fact that this town (like Râmnicul Sărat) had no monasteries, whose archives are very useful in urban research. It was only in the 16th–18th centuries that monasteries gained numerous plots of land, houses, and stores in towns.

The customs duty mentioned in 1368 features as a *tributum*, indicating the existence of a settlement that had an at least pre-urban status, the *tributum* being an internal customs duty paid in towns or *târgs*. The taxes collected here were eliminated by specific demand of the Braşov merchants, who wished to deal away with an obstacle in their

<sup>358</sup> DRH, B, VII, p. 229, doc. 172.

<sup>359</sup> DRH, B, XXIV, p. 473, doc. 352.

<sup>360</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor 2000*, pp. 203–204.

<sup>361</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>362</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VI, pp. 105, 727–728.

<sup>363</sup> *Dicţionarul limbii române*, tom X, part 4, p. 1044.

<sup>364</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

trade with Vidin.<sup>365</sup> In versions of the privilege granted by Mircea the Old and his followers, Slatina is no longer mentioned. Customs taxes here only applied to local merchants.<sup>366</sup> In 1421, Radu II Prasnaglava renewed the donations made by Mircea the Old to the Cozia monastery, along with the vineyards and other properties in Slatina.<sup>367</sup> A document issued by Vlad the Dragon mentions “the Slatina road,” which followed the Olt river towards the Danube ford, linking Râmnic with Turnu and Nikopol.<sup>368</sup> Located where this road crossed the routes from Pitești and Craiova, the settlement thrived, but none of the documents cited provide any clear indication whether Slatina was a *târg* or a town. This is only clarified after 1500. A battle waged by Radu of Afumați near Slatina is mentioned in his epitaph as being waged in “the town of Slatina.”<sup>369</sup> From “the seat town of Slatina,” Vlad Vîntilă issued two documents in 1535, and, in 1541, Radu Paisie was in the “seat” of Slatina, from which he gave ordinance.<sup>370</sup> Its mention as a “seat” shows that there was a small (unidentified) ruler’s residence in Slatina, and its mention as a “town” in an original document reveals that at that time, Slatina was already part of the privileged towns of the country. The town *județ* is first mentioned only later.<sup>371</sup>

The privilege was probably granted in the 15th century. The settlement had then become developed enough to take up trade with Transylvanian towns. In 1500, customs records in Sibiu include several names of Slatina merchants, among them some who brought goods several times a year. The names are mostly Romanian.<sup>372</sup> From the 16th century on, some townspeople focus on the cattle trade south of the Danube, since it proved more lucrative.<sup>373</sup>

<sup>365</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 173–175.

<sup>366</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 197–199, doc. 120–121.

<sup>367</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 98, doc. 49.

<sup>368</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 148, doc. 84; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 207; vol. VI, p. 225.

<sup>369</sup> *Inscripțiile medievale*, p. 224, doc. 241.

<sup>370</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 334, doc. 199; IV, p. 133, doc. 104.

<sup>371</sup> DIR, XVII, B, III, p. 282, doc. 249.

<sup>372</sup> *Rechnungen*, pp. 275–298; Manolescu, “Relațiile comerciale,” p. 257.

<sup>373</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 204, doc. 216.

*Târgoviște*

Along with Câmpulung, Târgoviște was one of the major towns of Wallachia. Its name is very common, being also encountered in Central and Eastern Europe. We have identified it in Bulgarian and Serbian town names, as well as a place name in Croatian (*trgovištse*), Serbian (*trgovište*), Ukrainian (*torhovytsa*), Slovakian (*trhovište*) and Polish (*targowisko*).<sup>374</sup> There were also some other villages in Oltenia, Banat, and Moldavia named as such.<sup>375</sup> As we have shown before, everywhere in the Slavonic world, *târg* is a marketplace or a trading post, whereas the suffix *-iște*, Slavonic as well, indicates previous existence.<sup>376</sup> Târgoviște therefore means “the place where a *târg* used to be,” a translation which suggests that we are dealing with a temporary interruption in the functioning of the trading post. The Wallachian Târgoviște underwent a similar process.<sup>377</sup>

The old *târg* on the Ialomița valley completed the road to town status in the 14th century. Three components contributed in its urbanization: one small stronghold, a suburb inhabited by the locals, and another suburb where a group of Saxon colonists settled. Until recently, it was believed that the first fortification in Târgoviște was from Mircea the Old’s reign, but recent findings dated it at least a couple of decades before that.<sup>378</sup> The lack of any clear archaeological evidence does not allow us to pinpoint the date when the first, small stone residence, enclosed by a brick wall and a moat, was erected.<sup>379</sup> It is also likely that it previously belonged to a former local ruler. Close to this stronghold, the medieval town grew out of two nuclei:

1. an older local settlement, south-west of the stronghold, whose inhabitants grouped around the future St Nicholas-Geartoglu and Stelea Veche churches;

<sup>374</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 266; Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 445; Marsina, “Pour l’histoire des villes,” p. 30.

<sup>375</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 420, doc. 260; *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova*, vol. I, part 2, ed. Dragoș Moldovanu (Bucharest, 1992), p. 1193; Suci, *Dicționar istoric*, vol. II, p. 196.

<sup>376</sup> Pascu, *Sufixe*, pp. 250–252.

<sup>377</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. II, p. 307.

<sup>378</sup> N. Constantinescu, Cristian Moisescu, *Curtea domnească din Târgoviște*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1969), pp. 17–19.

<sup>379</sup> Constantinescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” pp. 71–78; Diaconescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” pp. 67–68; Sinigalia, *Arhitectura civilă*, pp. 67–68.

2. a more recent colonist settlement, north-west, with the church of St Mary as its main church.

Settlers occupied a territory previously inhabited by the locals, which we can only surmise the latter had to give over and remain south-west of the fortification.<sup>380</sup> The privileged town grew out of the second settlement, since it was here that the outside group settled, receiving a more distinct status. Later on, over the course of the 14th century, this status also extended to cover people in the second settlement.

Târgoviște is the southernmost centre where we know for sure Saxon colonists settled. Archaeological and documentary sources date their arrival from Transylvania at the end of 13th–early 14th centuries. Their presence from that point on is supported by findings in the north-west area of the town: a type of ceramic dating from that time, which displays ample similarity with the ceramics in southern Transylvania, associated with the Saxons.<sup>381</sup> The so-called *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor* adopted the local tradition claiming that the building of the Catholic church of St Mary occurred around 1300, during Radu Negru's reign.<sup>382</sup> The dawn of the colony (and of the town) can therefore be dated to the same period as Câmpulung. A *locatio* probably regulated the arrival of the Saxons. This hypothesis has little topographical evidence to support it, since the town changed drastically: the central marketplace was displaced several times, the population declined, the structure of the older Catholic neighbourhood changed, and the Communist era also brought about its own modifications. In the St Mary church area, fragments of a frequent, rigorous parcellation survived until modern times; they may have been related to the older marketplace present here.<sup>383</sup> The granting of a previously locally-inhabited land to the Saxons suggests distribution, coordinated by both the ruler, and the leader of the newcomers. To settled in the new territory, settlers had to outline new parcels of land, since they brought other, more efficient patterns for organizing the land from Transylvania. Baia, in Moldavia, was another instance of this, where settlers redistributed the tracts of land in their

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<sup>380</sup> Diaconescu, "Cercetări arheologice," p. 69, note 7; *Atlas istoric. Târgoviște*, p. II, VII, map V.

<sup>381</sup> Muscă, "Noi date privind locuirea," pp. 22–23.

<sup>382</sup> *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor*, p. 51; Chihăia, *Artă medievală*, p. 290.

<sup>383</sup> *Atlas istoric. Târgoviște*, map V; Moisescu, "Originea și structura," p. 14.

settlement.<sup>384</sup> Even though no medieval town outline remains, written sources show that the Saxon area had the following landmarks:

1. Ulița Mare, which would become the main street in town;
2. the first main marketplace, developed between their neighbourhood and the fortified residence of the ruler;
3. the Church of St Mary, built near the marketplace.<sup>385</sup>

The other evidence to a well thought-out reception of the colonists has to do with elements specific to their community structure, absent in other Wallachian towns. It is only in Târgoviște that several officials who had obviously come from Transylvania feature: the *birău* and the *folnog*. In the few papers that mention them, they join the *vornics*, *pristavs* and other servants to the ruler. Therefore, they are his representatives, with certain duties (administrative and legal) regarding the Saxons in town. It is in Târgoviște as well that the mandatory night watch is mentioned, but not by one of the local terms of *pază* or *strajă*, but by the Latin *viglu* (from Lat. *vigilia*).<sup>386</sup> The first town *județ* mentioned in Wallachian documents comes from Târgoviște (1424).<sup>387</sup> On the documents he issued, he would apply a seal with Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. The only church in town with St Mary as its patron was the Catholic one.<sup>388</sup> In completion of the privilege which granted the community distinct legal status, Mircea the Old or one of his predecessors granted the townspeople economic liberties as well: exemptions from customs duties in the country, except those in their own town.<sup>389</sup> Therefore, early 15th century paints a picture of a well managed community, with numerous elements borrowed from Transylvania. At that time, the locals had been integrated into the community, and the second marketplace, south-west of the residence, was emerging. As for the degree of urban occupation, archaeological research confirms that, after 1400, the town had the density of a fully developed town. Both in the marketplace area by the stronghold, and in the Romanian one, several large dwellings have been found. They were made

<sup>384</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 22, 156; vol. 2, pp. 16, 42; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 153–154.

<sup>385</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 12; vol. IV, pp. 318–321; vol. V, p. 215.

<sup>386</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39; Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis*, pp. 1100–1101.

<sup>387</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 102, doc. 52.

<sup>388</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 354, doc. 268; Virtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 493–494.

<sup>389</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 109, doc. 55.



of wood, had cellars and rooms with interior comfort items, as well as tiled stoves, following a Central-European model.<sup>390</sup> The wealth of the inhabitants is reflected by the money troves found, dating back to Mircea the Old. More significantly, the largest treasure trove of this time was found in the Saxon neighbourhood (6284 silver coins), and another, not as vast, was uncovered in the other side of the town (295 silver coins).<sup>391</sup> In 1400, the town orbited around the Catholic area, the transfer to the Romanian area only coming after the Saxon community entered its decline in the 16th century.

The fact that Târgoviște does not feature in the privilege granted to Braşov in 1368 is irrelevant. Although it was on the road recommended for merchant travel to Brăila, it was left out, but so were many others. The capital at Argeş is also missing. The granting of a privileged status to the inhabitants, economic growth and better living conditions increased the appeal of Târgoviște for the ruling authority. In 1396, the Bavarese Johann Schiltberger, a crusader for Nikopol, stated among others: “I have travelled to Wallachia as well, in its two capitals, called Argeş (*Agrich*) and Târgoviște (*Turkoich*).”<sup>392</sup> At that point, Târgoviște had become a secondary residence for the prince, being used by Mihail I, son and co-ruler of Mircea the Old.<sup>393</sup> Mircea continued to live in Argeş, as documents issued by him show. As a single ruler, Mihail I resided in Târgoviște, whereas Dan II preferred Argeş. Ever since the reign of Alexandru Aldea (1431–1436), most rulers until Vlad the Impaler included, preferred Târgoviște. All throughout this period, the palace is extended and refurbished and a new church, with a nearby tower, is added.<sup>394</sup> The entire compound is surrounded by stone walls and a moat of considerable size.<sup>395</sup> 1465

<sup>390</sup> Constantinescu, Ionescu, “Asupra habitatului urban,” pp. 61–74; Gh. I. Cantacuzino, P. Diaconescu, G. Mihăescu, “Cercetările arheologice în zona centrală a oraşului Târgoviște,” *MCA* (Bucharest, 1983), pp. 508–512 and *MCA* (Bucharest, 1986), pp. 291–293.

<sup>391</sup> A list of coins discovered in *Atlas istoric. Târgoviște*, p. XV.

<sup>392</sup> *Călători străini*, I, p. 30.

<sup>393</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 62–63; Virtosu, *Titulatura domnilor*, p. 292; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, p. 80.

<sup>394</sup> N. Stoicescu, Cristian Moisescu, *Târgoviştea și monumentele sale* (Bucharest, 1976), p. 49; Sinigalia, *Arhitectura civilă*, pp. 65–71.

<sup>395</sup> The walls were 1.25–1.80 metres thick, while the moat had 24–25 metres at its mouth and 14 at its base (Constantinescu, Ionescu, “Asupra habitatului urban,” pp. 55–56; Constantinescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” p. 75; Diaconescu, “Cercetări arheologice,” pp. 67–68; Cantacuzino, *Cetăți medievale*, pp. 226–228). See also *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 322; vol. II, p. 428; vol. V, pp. 213, 216.

sees the beginning of a two-century long period, where rulers alternate between Târgoviște and Bucharest, as interests or political support dictated. Târgoviște was usually the residence of those friendly towards Transylvania and the Hungarian king.

The position of the town, an important marketplace, is consolidated around 1400. Mircea the Old granted the merchants in Poland the right to freely bring their merchandise into Wallachia. They were to be exempted of customs duties, the only exception being Târgoviște: the town received staple right for the merchandise brought by the Poles.<sup>396</sup> This document is not dated, but we will follow Petre P. Panaitescu's interpretation, which suggests the year 1403.<sup>397</sup> At that time, Târgoviște was already considered a main internal customs point, as acknowledged by the privileges granted to Brașov in 1412–1413.<sup>398</sup>

Merchants in town were not overlooked in the privilege that granted all merchants from Muntenia rights to trade with Brașov.<sup>399</sup> On several occasions, the princes or the town *județ* intervened in Brașov to regulate various misunderstandings that the townspeople were involved in. During the reign of Vlad the Impaler, the *pârgari* in Târgoviște would summon to testify some merchants involved in a scandal in Brașov: the merchandise of some boyars had been seized.<sup>400</sup> It was from that same period that a mention of Zanvel in Târgoviște has been preserved. He had been killed and robbed in Transylvania. The large amounts he held and the Ypres clothes he wore at the time of the attack betray the presence of a relatively powerful patriciate in Târgoviște, that Zanvel was part of.<sup>401</sup> The customs records in Brașov make ample reference to merchants from Târgoviște, bringing in livestock, wax, fish, and taking home cloth, shoes, and metal items.<sup>402</sup> In 1503, the merchandise carried into Brașov placed Târgoviște third among Wallachian towns (with around 560000 asprons); it took the lead in the next years.<sup>403</sup> Merchants from Brașov also came in Târgoviște. Neagoe Basarab even included the town among those with staple right for merchandise brought by inhabitants of Brașov, but this measure was only

<sup>396</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, pp. 3–4.

<sup>397</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 121.

<sup>398</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118; pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121.

<sup>399</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>400</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 249, doc. 154; p. 333, doc. 237.

<sup>401</sup> Bogdan, *Documente privitoare*, p. 81, doc. LVI; DRH, D, I, p. 351, doc. 255.

<sup>402</sup> *Quellen*, vol. III, pp. 186–249, 291–304; Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 204–205.

<sup>403</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–267.

short-lived.<sup>404</sup> Târgoviște traded actively with the other major town north of the mountains, Sibiu. Around 1495, Vlad the Monk and the townspeople asked in writing the *judex* in Sibiu to solve some disputes regarding the cloth that a *pârgar* from Târgoviște sold there.<sup>405</sup> In the 1500 customs records in Sibiu, several merchants from Târgoviște are noted as buying shoes, iron and cloth, one of them being even the associate of an Italian.<sup>406</sup>

The town was an important outlet for wine and salt. The hills around Târgoviște were covered with vineyards, and the wine taxes collected from townsmen were a consistent source of income for the ruler.<sup>407</sup> The inhabitants were, however, granted reductions in these duties, as a late confirmation shows.<sup>408</sup> There was a salt mine near Târgoviște, called Ocna Mică, to distinguish it from Ocna Mare, near Râmnic. Even if its income was donated by the rulers to the monastery of Argeș, the salt extracted here was also sold on the Târgoviște market.<sup>409</sup>

An onomastic study into the 15th–16th sources reveals that Romanians became the majority in town. During the early days of the town, it is impossible to assess their, or the Saxons' numbers, since no statistics remain. From 1581, when the first data of this kind is relayed to us, the Catholic community was dwindling substantially. Due to the Reform, some members had left for Transylvania, and those remaining were about to be assimilated. Greeks joined the Saxons and the Romanians. They had arrived here in early 15th century: Nicola Metaxar and Gherghe Paranudi have seemingly Greek names; they are noted as serfs of a local monastery during the reign of Mihail I.<sup>410</sup> The Greeks display a dramatic increase in numbers after 1500. The ones who came to trade set themselves up in town, while the monks preferred the nearby monasteries of Dealul or Panaghia.<sup>411</sup>

<sup>404</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 80, doc. LXXXII; p. 151, doc. CLIII.

<sup>405</sup> Dragomir, *Documente nouă*, p. 23, doc. 13; p. 25, doc. 34; pp. 68–69, doc. 76–77.

<sup>406</sup> *Rechnungen*, pp. 286–298.

<sup>407</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 213; DRH, B, II, p. 421, doc. 220; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 376, doc. 394.

<sup>408</sup> Drăghiceanu, “O tocmeală,” p. 88; Radu Gioglovan, “O ‘tocmeală’ a lui Matei Basarab,” pp. 45–47.

<sup>409</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 148, doc. 289.

<sup>410</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 82, doc. 39.

<sup>411</sup> DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 219, doc. 230; XVII, B, II, p. 267, doc. 241; DRH, B, XI, p. 355, doc. 268.

The Catholic church of St Mary was erected in its first stage around 1300. The Ottomans devastated it in 1395 and it was rebuilt with the aid of Mihail I's mother, a Catholic. In 1417, the church had gained its new shape, more impressive, made of brick and with a belfry on the north side.<sup>412</sup> In 1440, documents mention one Mihail *plebanus* from Târgoviște, the parish priest.<sup>413</sup> A Dominican and a Franciscan monastery were also erected in town. The first functioned before 1370, while the latter came into use afterwards. In 1521, a “guardian” and “brethren of the Minorite” from Târgoviște are recorded in Brașov, so the Franciscan monastery probably dates to the turn of the 16th century.<sup>414</sup> As the number of non-Catholics grew, even more Orthodox churches were built. As suggested by patriarch Nifon, Radu the Great decided to move the seat of the Metropolitan Orthodox Church of Wallachia from Argeș to Târgoviște (1517).<sup>415</sup> The construction work on the new church began under Radu, but they were finished under Neagoe Basarab (1520).<sup>416</sup> At the end of the 16th century, Baltasar Walther's chronicle reported the distorted figure of 40 churches in town.<sup>417</sup> In fact, there were only 15 in all, wooden churches included, which lasted only briefly because of the many fires and destruction.

The first monastery built near town was the Dealu monastery, which dates back to at least 1431.<sup>418</sup> In the next century, it is joined by Viforâta, Golgota and Panaghia.<sup>419</sup> Their presence begins to alter the normal course of urban development. The town domain loses vast tracts of land to them in the latter half of the century.<sup>420</sup> Over time, the domains of townspeople were surrounded by the lands of the Dealu monastery, which had come to own all the neighbouring villages.<sup>421</sup>

<sup>412</sup> *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor*, p. 51; DRH, B, I, p. 86, doc. 42; Chihaiia, *Artă medievală*, p. 291.

<sup>413</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 157, doc. 90.

<sup>414</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, p. 341, 346; Chihaiia, *Din cetățile*, p. 365; Chihaiia, *Artă medievală*, p. 298; Viorel Achim, “Ordinul franciscan în țările române în secolele XIV–XV. Aspectele teritoriale,” *RI*, vol. VII, no. 5–6 (1996), pp. 402–403.

<sup>415</sup> *Viaja Sfântului Nifon*, ed. Mihăilă, pp. 94–97; *Istoria Țării Românești*, pp. 35–41.

<sup>416</sup> Stoicescu, Moisescu, *Târgoviște*, pp. 170–171.

<sup>417</sup> Simonescu, “Cronica,” p. 82.

<sup>418</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 133, doc. 72.

<sup>419</sup> DRH, B, VI, p. 284, doc. 232; DRH, B, XI, p. 238, doc. 181; pp. 354–357, doc. 268–269; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 219, doc. 230.

<sup>420</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 238, doc. 181, p. 354, doc. 268; p. 358, doc. 270.

<sup>421</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 133, doc. 72; DIR, XVII, B, II, p. 85, doc. 88; p. 296, doc. 267.

Târgoviște was the only fortified town in Wallachia. When describing the Ottoman attack in 1462, Laonic Chalcocondyl mentions the walls in Târgoviște, where there supposedly were gunners who fired at the besieging army. The author also takes the time to describe the impaling stakes on the nearby field.<sup>422</sup> On the same occasion, the Turkish chronicler Tursun beg mentions a wooden stronghold (*Agaç-Hisar*) where the ruler resided, probably Târgoviște as well.<sup>423</sup> The fortifications of the ruler's palace withstood a 15-day siege laid by the armies of Stephen Báthory in 1476, sent by King Matthias Corvinus to restore Vlad the Impaler's reign.<sup>424</sup> The town defenses, which were probably made of wood, are also mentioned by Felix Petančić (1502) and Francesco della Valle from Padua (1532).<sup>425</sup> In the 17th century, the fortification was completely rebuilt by Matei Basarab.<sup>426</sup>

Since it had become the capital of the country, Târgoviște was often a target of outside attacks. The great Ottoman siege of 1395 was among the major events in the town's history, when it was set on fire by Bayezid I's armies.<sup>427</sup> Traces of this massive fire were also revealed archaeologically.<sup>428</sup> In 1457, Vlad the Impaler punished the townspeople for their involvement in his brother's assassination.<sup>429</sup> The chronicle states that the townspeople of high standing were killed, and the young ones were made to work on the stronghold at Poenari.<sup>430</sup> In 1462, the Turks reached the town area again, but it did not fall.<sup>431</sup> This was not the case in 1476, when Stephen Báthory conquered it.<sup>432</sup> Other battles were waged in the region soon after the reign of Neagoe Basarab or under Radu of Afumați.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>422</sup> Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 289.

<sup>423</sup> *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, p. 67.

<sup>424</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 95, doc. 167; Bogdan, *Documente privilegiate*, p. 357, doc. CCCXII.

<sup>425</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 322, 444.

<sup>426</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. VI, p. 106, 118; *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 106; George Potra, *Tezaurul documentar al județului Dâmbovița (1418–1800)* (Târgoviște, 1972), p. 212, doc. 353.

<sup>427</sup> *Cronica mănăstirii franciscanilor*, p. 51.

<sup>428</sup> Constantinescu, Ionescu, "Asupra habitatului urban," pp. 67–68; Diaconescu, "Cercetări arheologice," p. 68.

<sup>429</sup> Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>430</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 4; *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 15.

<sup>431</sup> Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice*, p. 289; *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, p. 67.

<sup>432</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 95, doc. 167; Bogdan, *Documente privilegiate*, p. 357, doc. CCCXII.

<sup>433</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 42; *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 37–38; Câdea, "Letopisețul Țării Românești," p. 683; *Inscripțiile medievale*, p. 224, doc. 241.

*Târgșor*

The town of Târgșor was built in a densely wooded area. It thrived due to its excellent location, where many roads crossed: the road that came directly from Brașov, on the valley of the Prahova river and the “Brăila road” which came from Târgoviște and led to Gherghița, Brăila or Bucharest.<sup>434</sup> The settlement was at the midpoint between Târgoviște, Gherghița, and the customs house in Câmpina (some 40 kms away from each), and was a stop-over for those coming from these directions.

The development of the local *târg* into a town was favoured by an increase in commercial traffic on the road to Brăila, after the privilege for Brașov was granted (1368), in which Târgșor does not feature.<sup>435</sup> The transition to urban status ends between 1368 and 1412, with Mircea the Old’s reign as a turning point (1386–1418). This is also evidenced by the discovery of several coins issued by Vădislav I, Radu I and Mircea the Old.<sup>436</sup> Mircea’s reign also provides us the first mention of the settlement, that we will find in the document passed by Stibor, voivode of Transylvania (September 1412), confirming for the townspeople of Brașov “privileges of yore and worthy liberties.”<sup>437</sup> As with similar rights granted to the same merchants by Mircea the Old in August 1413, this document reinstates an older privilege granted by one of the rulers that preceded Mircea on the throne (Radu I or Dan I).<sup>438</sup> Târgșor features here among the new customs points. As such, the town is noted in all later privileges granted by the rules of Brașov until Vlad the Dragon.<sup>439</sup>

The name of the settlement varies across the languages used for the document. Latin documents refer to it as *Novo Foro* (“The New Marketplace”), while Slavonic ones adopt the Romanian Târgșor, a diminutive for the word *târg* (“small *târg*”). The name of the town must be related to neighbouring Târgoviște. Although the two settlements are mentioned in roughly the same period, Târgoviște was larger and

<sup>434</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 118, doc. 91; Binder, “Drumurile,” pp. 211–212.

<sup>435</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 86, doc. 46.

<sup>436</sup> Gh. Diaconu et al., “Săpăturile arheologice de la Târgșorul Vechi,” *MCA*, vol. 5 (1959), p. 622; Gheorghe Diaconu, Nicolae I. Simache, “Cercetări arheologice la Târgșorul Vechi,” *RM*, vol. I, no. 1 (1964), p. 28.

<sup>437</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118.

<sup>438</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 197–198, doc. 120–121.

<sup>439</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 340, doc. 243; p. 369, doc. 268.

older, whereas Târgșor was smaller and more recent. Over time, Latin documents also adopted the Romanian name, and this form would gain the upper hand until the end of the 15th century.<sup>440</sup>

We cannot tell whether by Novo Foro the scribes referred to its status as a town or as a *târg*. Under Mircea the Old or immediately afterwards, the inhabitants receive the autonomy privilege. Their presence in the trade privilege granted for merchants in Muntenia supports this.<sup>441</sup> The *judet* and the 12 *pârgari* are first mentioned only later, after 1500.<sup>442</sup> Until now, no town seal for Târgșor has been identified. It has not survived to this day because few documents issued by town authorities have been kept, and the seal had fallen off the remaining ones. Internal sources do not cite any colonists in Târgșor, nor any Catholic church, so the contribution of an outside group to urbanization was minimal or even absent. Without any other information, the only theory on the early stages of the town is that of a transition from *târg* to town with the ruler's support.

Târgșor also had a residence for the prince, the age of which cannot be dated earlier than the 16th century using documents. Only Neagoe Basarab refers to Târgșor as a “seat” for the ruler.<sup>443</sup> In this area, princes preferred the residence at Gherghița above all other towns. However, we believe that the residence in Târgșor is older. Proof to this is a church built by Vladislas II in town, called “the ruler’s church” (Rom. *biserica domnească*).<sup>444</sup> Churches termed and seen as such were not erected by the rulers to serve the needs of the community, but those of their palaces. In recent years, archaeologists focused their attention on a construction they believed to be the ancient palace,<sup>445</sup> but which was actually the church of St Nicholas, built by Vlad the Monk, as a 1497 document suggest.<sup>446</sup> The two churches are different in structure and purpose. Furthermore, they were built by rulers from different branches of the dynasty. Vladislav II was killed in 1456 “in the middle of the marketplace,” so we believe that his presence in Târgșor was

<sup>440</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 228, doc. 141; *Quellen*, vol. I, pp. 1–12.

<sup>441</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 130, doc. 69.

<sup>442</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 309, doc. CLXXXIV.

<sup>443</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 80, doc. LXXXII.

<sup>444</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 4; *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>445</sup> Diaconu, “Săpăturile arheologice,” pp. 620–623; Diaconu, Simache, “Cercetări arheologice,” pp. 24–28; N. Constantinescu, “Note arheologice și istorice asupra curții feudale de la Târgșor (sec. XV–XVII),” *SCIV*, vol. XX, no. 1 (1969), pp. 91–97.

<sup>446</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 448, doc. 275. See also Rădvan, *Orașele*, pp. 506–509.

no accident. He took interest in the town and in the palace he could have built here.<sup>447</sup> Reason tells us that, without a fortified location to defend himself, he would not have come here. The residence built by him decayed after 1600, and only the church survived, now in ruins as well.<sup>448</sup>

The basis of the town's economy was trade. Its development peaks around 1500, when, along with Câmpulung and Târgoviște, Târgșor temporarily gains staple right as a town and becomes a mandatory outlet for merchants from Brașov.<sup>449</sup> Its position as a major economic centre is also reinforced by the place it had in trade relations with Brașov. In 1503, the merchants in town traded merchandise worth almost one million asprons with Brașov, being second only to Câmpulung and outclassing Târgoviște.<sup>450</sup> Trade was by all means mutual, many merchants from Transylvania coming to buy merchandise in Târgșor, where, along with the town marketplace, a large annual fair was held as well. Whereas the fair in Câmpulung was held on St Elijah's day, the one in Târgșor was held before Easter, as one document issued around 1533 shows.<sup>451</sup> Research into names in customs records shows that most merchants in Târgșor have Romanian names (Tudor, Stan, Costea, Oprea etc.), and some, foreign ones (Tabutsch, Francilla and Simon).<sup>452</sup> The town's renown attracted Greeks, who settled in town in the 16th century.<sup>453</sup>

Its decay did not begin after Ștefăniță's (Moldavia's ruler) 1526 attack,<sup>454</sup> as some experts believe.<sup>455</sup> The vast presence of merchants from Târgșor on the Brașov market and the arrival of some rulers here long after 1526 discards this theory. The town begins its decline in the 17th century, mainly because another town emerged nearby, in Ploiești. Since this proximity also bred rivalry, one of them had to fall, and this one was Târgșor.

<sup>447</sup> *Istoria Țării Românești*, p. 4; *Istoriile domnilor*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>448</sup> Potra, Simache, *Contribuții*, p. 343, doc. 3; p. 360, doc. 22; Stoicescu, *Bibliografia localităților*, vol. II, pp. 650–651.

<sup>449</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 80, doc. LXXXII; p. 151, doc. CLIII; p. 188, doc. CLV.

<sup>450</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>451</sup> Bogdan, *Documente și regeste*, p. 309, doc. CLXXXV.

<sup>452</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, pp. 1–67.

<sup>453</sup> DRH, B, XI, p. 35, doc. 35; p. 282, doc. 212.

<sup>454</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 94; *Istoriile domnilor*, p. 40.

<sup>455</sup> N. Cazacu, "Despre data rezidirii bisericii mănăstirii Târgșor," *Glasul Bisericii* (Bucharest) vol. XXII, no. 7–8 (1963), p. 732.



*Târgul Jiului*

Along with Bucharest and Craiova, Târgul Jiului is among the most recent towns in the country, emerged towards the end of the Middle Ages, in the 16th century. We will only briefly stop to discuss it, since it falls under the category of towns derived from the local *târgs* in Oltenia.

The town developed on the river Jiu. Its name shows that it initially was a *târg* for the valley of this river. It is first mentioned under this name under Dan II, who acknowledged in 1429–1430 some mills for the monastery at Tismana built by Agaton, the monastery's prior.<sup>456</sup> Unlike Pitești and Râmnic, where mills granted by rulers to monasteries were on official domain, the Târgul Jiului case shows us that this is different. Mills had been erected by monks on land donated by two boyars, and not by the ruler, who is only mentioned to acknowledge ownership. The domain at Târgul Jiului emerges ever since early 15th century as property of a boyar. What's more, all along the 14th–18th centuries, no information shows the existence of a ruler's residence in Târgul Jiului. From here, princes did not issue any documents, as specific to the entire area west of the Olt.

The later evolution of Târgul Jiului is blurred by the passage of time. The only sources that shed some light on it are some early 17th century documents (1604, 1611). They show that the settlement had two different owners. In the 15th century and early 16th, one part of it was controlled by the influential Buzescu family.<sup>457</sup> The other part belonged to a different boyar family, that allowed the inhabitants to reclaim their freedom in 1512–1521. The sum they paid in exchange for this was staggering for those times (100000 asprons). This suggests that those paying it had other sources of income other than agriculture. Under Mircea the Shepherd, members of the Buzescu family are charged with high treason, and the prince seizes their lands, including those in Târgul Jiului. Mircea's next step was to grant the community the right to have a permanent marketplace. The inhabitants probably receive the right to elect the *județ* and the *pângari* at this point as well.<sup>458</sup> Even though the Buzescus regained their part of the domain in 1604,

<sup>456</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 124, doc. 64.

<sup>457</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 248, doc. 205–206.

<sup>458</sup> DIR, XVII, B, I, p. 132, doc. 137; Ștefulescu, *Istoria Târgu-Jiului*, pp. 18–20.

the town survived undeterred on the other tract of land, indicating that the privilege was either granted to both components of the settlement ever since the beginning, or that it was later extended to the part controlled by the free men. We cannot otherwise explain the presence of the *județ* and the *pârgari*, but also that of a *pârcălab*, in a 1591 document or in later ones.<sup>459</sup> Economically, inhabitants were closely associated with merchants in the regions nearest to them in Transylvania, Hațeg and Sebeș.<sup>460</sup> However, where the 15th–16th centuries are concerned, sources describing this town are scarce.

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<sup>459</sup> DIR, XVI, B, VI, p. 22, doc. 26; XVII, B, IV, p. 426, doc. 437; DRH, B, XXI, p. 37, doc. 25.

<sup>460</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 123, doc. 75, p. 176, doc. 111; IV, p. 248, doc. 205–206.



PART THREE  
TOWNS IN MOLDAVIA



## CHAPTER ONE

### URBANIZATION

#### *Background*

As with Wallachia, research into Moldavian medieval towns cannot be undertaken without an insight into the political, economic, and religious background of the area. Sources are unsatisfactory here as well, and to explain how towns emerge, we must rely on both internal and external accounts. Archaeological excavations serve to complement our findings, even though they were undertaken in a well-regulated fashion in only but a few cases.

The area between the Carpathians and the Dniester was uncommon in its political status. At the turn of the 13th century, it had come under the influence of the Cumans, who had extended the scope of their vast empire by foraging and pillaging, but also by collecting taxes from their subjects. Archaeological research, as well as the study of place or river names has brought to light the presence of Cuman populations mostly in southern Moldavia, in the Wallachian Plain, but also on inland river valleys that the Turkics used to get to richer pastures.<sup>1</sup>

After 1204, the king of Hungary made a decisive move in the north-Danubian area, serving the political and economic purposes of his dominion. He extended his influence beyond the mountains by the proxy of Teutonic Knights. Sources do not share any factual data on how the Knights' presence affected the realms east of the Carpathians (1211–1225).<sup>2</sup> The only point of true interest for historians has been a land mentioned along with the Kreuzburg stronghold in two documents, a land that supposedly stretched “as far as the boundaries of the *brodnic*” (1222).<sup>3</sup> These *brodnics* (“the people by the ford”), as well as the *berladnics* or the *bolohovenians*, mentioned in other sources, are impossible to identify with sources at hand today. All these groups had

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<sup>1</sup> Spinei, *Realități etnice*, pp. 149–155.

<sup>2</sup> Papacostea, *Români*, pp. 31–35.

<sup>3</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 1–4, doc. 1–2.

probably dwelled east of the Carpathians, but we cannot highlight any direct bearing they had over Moldavia in its later days.<sup>4</sup> The foundation of the bishopric of Cumania in 1227 indicates that Hungarian kings did reap some of the benefits of Teutonic actions. The messages exchanged by Pope Gregory IX and Bela, future king, do not provide any clue as to the location of some *valahi* in the area, who had their own *pseudoepiscopis*.<sup>5</sup> *Civitas Milcoviae* was somewhere in southern Moldavia, on the Milcov river, and Moldavia would span towards it only during Ștefan the Great's reign. Therefore, the bishopric's direct influence on Moldavia's emergence as state was only negligible, since Moldavia had its political core in the north.

The Mongol invasion in 1241–1242 had direct consequences on the area east of the Carpathians. It is believed that at least two Mongol armies crossed Moldavia from east to west, while aiming for Transylvania and Hungary. One made headway towards Rodna, and the other crossed the mountains at the Oituz pass, after devastating the bishopric of Cumania. The damage that archaeologists indicated in the fortalice at Bâta Doamnei suggests that another Mongol group passed through there and used the Bistrița valley to enter Transylvania.<sup>6</sup> In much the same way as the Russian principalities of Galician Rus' and Vladimir, the region that would become the state of Moldavia was in the grasp of the Golden Horde, which set up its capital on the Volga, at Sarai.<sup>7</sup> The Cuman domination was superseded by the rigours of Mongol control. As Giovanni di Plano Carpini would note, the Mongols divided their influence in two different areas: one that was under the direct rule of Mongol leaders, and one under hegemony, which covered various states and populations. The rulers of these states were forced to travel regularly to the khan's court, to pay tribute, to offer compensations by labour and to provide military support when requested to do so.<sup>8</sup>

The lack of sources prevents us from positively stating that Romanians outside the Carpathians, especially those to the east, fell under

<sup>4</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 177–180; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 29–40.

<sup>5</sup> DH, vol. I, part 1, p. 108, doc. 83; DRH, D, I, p. 20, doc. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Spinei, *Marile migrații*, pp. 404–408.

<sup>7</sup> Russian chronicles provided the name of “Golden Horde”. Eastern sources refer to this land as *Ulus-Jochi* or the *Kipčak* khanate, the last name indicating the transfer of Cuman land and heritage to the Mongols (Spinei, *Marile migrații*, p. 428).

<sup>8</sup> *The Story of the Mongols* by Giovanni di Plano Carpini in Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 38–43.

direct rule or the hegemony of the Mongols. Most Romanian scholars give preference to the latter alternative. The Russian principalities which came under Mongol rule were also documented by population polls (1253–1257), focused on registering the tax-paying population. The taxes would be collected by the Mongols or the local authority.<sup>9</sup> We have no knowledge of any such polls in the Romanian-inhabited area, located at the edges of the Mongol scope of influence. Place names such as Bascacouți and Băscăceni (in north Moldavia) would substantiate this claim, as some scholars have it, at least for one part of Moldavia.<sup>10</sup> Along with place names, documents also capture the existence of Mongol slaves east of the Carpathians. They are probably the inheritors of Mongols who settled here when the khan's rule extended over this land, but may also have been prisoners of war. It was theorized that Duke Olaha, whom Giovanni di Plano Carpini had met while leaving Cumania, had been Romanian, but no other arguments to prove his origin exist, save his name. Di Plano Carpini considers him a Ruthenian duke, but we cannot rule out a possible error.<sup>11</sup> In his turn, William of Rubruck mentions the Vlachs (*blaci*) among the subjects who brought gifts to the khan (1253), *Blakia* being one of the Mongol domains.<sup>12</sup> Whether these Romanians came from south or north of the Danube, we cannot know for sure.<sup>13</sup> What we know for a fact is that, for almost one century, the east-Carpathian area was obviously influenced by events in the Mongol world. If we were to look at neighbouring states, from the Galician Rus' to Bulgaria and Serbia, whose princes became Mongol vassals, we would have to admit that in most Romanian-inhabited areas, the Mongols allowed local rulers free exercise of their power, provided they bowed to the khan's superior authority, by providing military support in times of need, and tribute. Geographically, the most exposed areas were those between the Prut, the Dniester, and the Danube Delta, and they came under full Mongol

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<sup>9</sup> Those overseeing polls and tax collection were called *basqaq* (Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 40). For the meanings of the term *basqaq*, see István Vásáry, "The Origin of the Institution of 'Basqaqs,'" in *Turks, Tatars and Russians in the 13th–16th Centuries* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 201–206 and Spinei, *Marile migrații*, pp. 435–437.

<sup>10</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 204, 277–278.

<sup>11</sup> Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, eds. Peter Jackson, David Morgan (London, 1990), pp. 66, 126, 139.

<sup>13</sup> Papacostea, *Români*, pp. 100–101.



control. The Mongols are famous for the highly efficient political and economic system they brought to their dominions, so they thought it more “lucrative” to leave the rest of the area that spanned between the Danube, the Prut, and the Carpathians to the control of local rulers, who acknowledged themselves as vassals.<sup>14</sup>

The effects of Mongol domination took a heavier toll when the Horde was in the prime of its power. However, the pressures diminished when it began to collapse. 1241–1299 is the heyday of the Mongols settled in Eastern Europe. Between 1257 and 1260, the Mongols and their Russian, Ruthenian and Lithuanian allies successfully attacked Poland, and less successfully, Hungary. After 1260, internal struggles occasioned a brief crisis in the Mongol empire, but a side-effect of this was a reinforced domination north of the Black Sea. In Isaccea, by the Lower Danube, the Mongol general Nogai set up the centre of his power, which would later become one of the decision-making factors in the Golden Horde.<sup>15</sup> In 1263, Pope Urban IV sent a message into Hungary, noting that the Mongols had destroyed some lands adjacent to the kingdom, and, in 1278, Pope Nicholas III observed that the seat of the Catholic bishopric on the Milcov, destroyed in 1241, was on the Mongol boundary.<sup>16</sup> From this boundary area, Nogai and his armies crossed into Transylvania and Hungary in 1284–1285 and 1292. The final decades of the 13th century and early 14th are the peak of Mongol domination in south-eastern Europe. The Hungarian kingdom was under the constant threat of a Mongol attack and was wavering in its foreign politics, since Bulgarian rulers were at the khan’s behest, while the Serbs sought his protection.<sup>17</sup> Nogai’s death, in 1299, led to a brief period of power struggles; however, the Mongols bolstered their control of the area under Khan Uzbek (1313–1342). It was only after his death that the political climate in Eastern Europe sees change, and, despite fierce Mongol opposition, the Christian kingdoms of Hungary and Poland push eastward.<sup>18</sup>

The Moldavian area was also influenced by the neighbouring principalities of Galician Rus’ and Vladimir. The Galician leader undoubtedly ruled over the land along the upper reaches of the Dniester, but

<sup>14</sup> Spinci, *Moldova*, p. 209; Spinci, *Marile migrații*, pp. 437–439.

<sup>15</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 174–189.

<sup>16</sup> DH, vol. I, part 1, p. 307, doc. 221; DRH, D, I, p. 29, doc. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Papacostea, *Români*, pp. 122–125.

<sup>18</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 195–208; Spinci, *Moldova*, pp. 208–217.

there is no definite information to tell us whether he also expanded south, towards future Moldavia. Sources do indicate that he had attempted to. In 1276–1277, during the battles between Ottokar II of Bohemia and Rudolph of Habsburg, some Romanians (*blacis*) at odds with the Ruthenians (*brutenis*) are mentioned. Their conflict prevented the latter to aid the king of Bohemia, who had asked them for support.<sup>19</sup> Historians have tended to place Romanians in northern Moldavia, but it is also possible that they were from Maramureș, in northern Transylvania.<sup>20</sup> The 1307 Rhymed Chronicle of Ottokar of Styria presents another episode where a ruler in future Moldavia was apparently involved. During the struggles for the Hungarian throne, the voivode of Transylvania, Ladislaus Kán, had taken prisoner his challenger, Otto III of Bavaria, who was dispatched to a “duke” (*herzog*), who ruled “beyond the mountains.” After being freed, Otto had supposedly left for Galician Rus’, where “King Gheorghe” (possibly Yuri Lvovici, 1301–1308), had started a war in “Vlach country” against the anonymous duke.<sup>21</sup> Details in the chronicle, its location “beyond the mountains,” the mention of the Vlachs and the conflict with Galicia allow us to identify this voivode with a north-Moldavian ruler.<sup>22</sup>

Except for these references, sources tell us nothing of any dominion or influence by the Galician Rus’ over Moldavian land. Further up north, we will find a more special situation, in the Land of Șepeniț, and especially in Hotin, where stone walls were erected in the latter half of the 13th century.<sup>23</sup> The last ruler of the Galician Rus’ was Boleslaw of Mazovia (also dubbed George Yuri II), who adopted the title *dux Russiae* around 1324–1325. Boleslaw’s ambiguous politics, who took sides at times with the Lithuanians, and at times with the Mongols, led to his demise in 1340 at the hands of the boyars: he was slain. This occasioned an attack of the Poles under King Casimir III

<sup>19</sup> *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. XXII, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Hanover, 1872), p. 525 [http://mdz11.bib-bvb.de/dmgh\\_new/app/web?action=loadBook&bookId=00000867](http://mdz11.bib-bvb.de/dmgh_new/app/web?action=loadBook&bookId=00000867) (8 March 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Brătianu, *Tradiția istorică*, pp. 174–185; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 69, note 3; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 97–106, 229–233.

<sup>21</sup> *Oesterreichische Reimchronik in Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. III, pp. 17–20.

<sup>22</sup> Constantin Cihodaru, “Constituirea statului feudal moldovenesc și lupta pentru realizarea independenței lui,” *SCȘI*, vol. XI, no. 1 (1960), p. 66; Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 233; Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, p. 185.

<sup>23</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 265.

(1333–1370), who conquers Lviv and forces the boyars to acknowledge his authority (1341), offering in exchange a vast autonomy.

The *Annales minorum* for the year 1340 mention the martyrdom of two Franciscan missionaries in Siret, in northern Moldavia.<sup>24</sup> If this account is real,<sup>25</sup> this anti-Catholic surge coincides with similar actions which occurred in Galician Rus' during missionary effort in Poland. The Franciscan ample reach, which reached as far as Lviv, shows both the dimensions of the political and religious effort of Christian powers against the Mongols, and their desire to bring the area under Catholic influence.<sup>26</sup> Internal struggles in Galician Rus' sparked a new Polish intervention, which leads to the full-blown conquest of western and central parts of the principality in 1349. One year later, Casimir III reaches an agreement with the Hungarian king, who also attempted to expand here. Louis I (1342–1382) abandons all claim to Galicia, but only in Casimir's lifetime. Louis' offer is also explained by his hopes of ascending the throne of Poland if Casimir would have died without any male heirs. His hopes were officially turned into fact in 1355, when Casimir named Louis as its successor at Buda.<sup>27</sup> After 1352, there followed a period of territorial struggles with Lithuania, which did not allow Casimir to consolidate his power in the land he had conquered. Although in 1352, the south-east border of Poland had reached the Ceremuş river, near the lands inhabited by Romanians, the boundary was only set here after negotiations with Lithuania in 1366–1367. Under Casimir III, the former Galician Rus' and Vladimir kept their previous organization, and were not yet fully integrated in the kingdom's structures. The entire area was a group of *ziemie*, which altogether formed *terra Russie*, part of the kingdom's lands. Most inhabitants were Ruthenians, Orthodox in faith, who had been joined by Armenians (in towns), with the king confirming their rights.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Annales minorum seu trium ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum*, ed. Luca Waddingo, vol. VII (Claras Aquas, 1932), p. 287.

<sup>25</sup> The editor of *Annales minorum* is not certain that this information is dated 1340; a note mentions that the martyrdom might actually have occurred in 1378 (*Annales minorum*, vol. VII, p. 287, note 4).

<sup>26</sup> Şerban Papacostea, "Triumful luptei," pp. 48–49; Achim, "Ordinul franciscan," p. 407.

<sup>27</sup> Paul W. Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish Monarchy. Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320–1370* (Chicago, 1972), pp. 121–145, 158.

<sup>28</sup> Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 155–173. The title of the Polish king now included "Russia": *Rex Polonie necnon terrarum Cracovie, Sandomirie, Siradie, Lancicie, Cuiavie, Pomoranie, Russieque dominus et heres* (Knoll, *The Rise*, p. 171).

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The birth of the principality of Moldavia is symbolically set in the year 1342. This is the year the Khan Uzbek dies, and King Louis of Hungary rises to power. In Eastern Europe, the Mongols attempted to hold their ground under the new khan, Janibeg (1342–1357). The new Hungarian king, a devout Christian, was also a steadfast proponent of the ideals of chivalry. He was poised to extend his rule beyond the Carpathians, but also to carry along the influence of the Church. After ensuring the vassal status and military support from Basarab I, ruler of Wallachia, Louis prepared a series of expeditions to the east, meant to weaken and ultimately drive away the Mongols from these lands. The bulk of the information on this matter is relayed by a chronicler of Louis' reign, John of Küküllő, who wrote his work shortly after the king passed away, after 1382.<sup>29</sup> The chronicler states that Louis dispatched an army to Moldavia soon after commencing his reign; this army was headed by the Szekler *comes*, Andrew Läckfi. The outcome is unclear, and this expedition is not accurately dated.<sup>30</sup> Another source mentions the year 1345 for a Szekler and Hungarian incursion into the “land of the Tatars” (possibly that of Andrew Läckfi).<sup>31</sup> Not before long, results were manifest. In 1347, the old Cumania bishopric is reactivated, borrowing the name of the bishopric of Milcovia, since the old name no longer agreed with the political climate in the area. Even so, the designated bishop did not come to claim his seat, since he lacked the means to do so.<sup>32</sup> The bishopric could not reclaim its domains, it had no places of worship and no income left, so most bishops did not even bother to come to Moldavia. Since it was designed with conversion in mind, it was subordinated directly to the pope. This deprived it of constant support from the archbishop of Esztergom

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<sup>29</sup> John of Küküllő's chronicle has not been preserved. Fragments of it were inserted in *Chronicon Budense*, *Chronicon Dubnicense* or *Chronica Hungarorum*, by Johannes of Thurocz (Engel, *The Realm of St. Stefan*, p. 158; Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 311).

<sup>30</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 72–75.

<sup>31</sup> The chronicle of John the Franciscan, inserted as well in *Chronicon Dubnicense* (Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 311–317; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 80–83).

<sup>32</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 45, doc. 22; p. 63, doc. 34. In *Descriptio Europae Orientalis* (1308), the description of Hungary also mentions the rivers Siret and Prut. The claims laid by Ungaria over the land east of the Carpathians were therefore known in Europe at that time (*Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. II, pp. 31, 58).

and the bishop of Transylvania.<sup>33</sup> Even so, the area was not short of missionaries.<sup>34</sup>

The first Hungarian forays match the onset of a massive crisis that swept through the Golden Horde. The centralized system of the great khan gave cause for discontent among some boyars, who sought more autonomy. Since it ruled over various populations, with different degrees of social and economic development, the Mongol empire lacked cohesion.<sup>35</sup> Christian victories over the Mongols were spurred on by an unexpected contributor: the plague. In 1346, there is an outbreak in Sarai, and it extends towards Crimea and to the rest of the Europe.<sup>36</sup> The Mongols begin to slacken their grip over the western parts of their vast dominion. In 1349 and 1353, they agree to a peace treaty with Poland, practically giving over the Galician Rus', in exchange for a tribute paid by the Poles.<sup>37</sup> Janibeg's death, in 1357, threw the Golden Horde into disarray, and over 20 khans rose to power and fell in the next two decades. Along with Poland and Hungary, Lithuania, not yet officially converted to Christianity, was among the states that reaped the benefits of the Mongol decline. The Grand Duke Olgierd (1345–1377), gained control over the states that followed after the Kievan Rus' and had come under Mongol hegemony. Under the Lithuanian reign, the local leadership system in the former principalities remained unchanged, the boyars and the Orthodox clergy keeping their positions. Only the positions of power were taken over by the ruling Lithuanian family, the Gediminas. Kiev and, later on, Smolensk were occupied. However, in the struggle over Galician Rus', Olgierd only reluctantly gave in to Poland.<sup>38</sup> The Lithuanians and the Koriatov brothers gained Podolia (after 1362–1363), for which they acknowledged sovereignty of the Polish king in 1366, all the while keeping a very generous autonomy.<sup>39</sup> The land north of the Black Sea,

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<sup>33</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 318–319; Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, p. 42, doc. XXIX; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup> C. Auner, "Episcopia Milcoviei în veacul al XIV-lea," *RC*, vol. III (1914), pp. 68–70; Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova*, pp. 32–38, 44–50.

<sup>35</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 130–137.

<sup>36</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 204–205; Robert S. Gottfried, *The Black Death. Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1983), pp. 33–53.

<sup>37</sup> Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 140, 156–157.

<sup>38</sup> Zigmantas Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania* (Vilnius, 2002), pp. 53–58, 66–70.

<sup>39</sup> Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 244–248.

between the mouths of the Dniester and the Bug, was later merged into Lithuania by Grand Duke Witold (1392/1401–1430).<sup>40</sup>

As Mongol power slowly crumbled, a power vacuum opened up east of the Carpathians, which led to two major shifts on the political map of the area. The first one to take advantage of the Mongol crisis was King Louis I who, after 1345–1347, brought under his command the Subcarpathian realm, at least up to the Siret river.<sup>41</sup> We cannot rule out a possible initial collaboration between Hungarian and Wallachian armies, at least for the lands south of the Trotuș.<sup>42</sup> Southern Moldavia would shortly afterwards (from 1375 on, probably), come under the control of the Wallachian rulers.<sup>43</sup> Otherwise, it is hard to explain why the southern part of the land between the Dniester and the Prut was named *Basarabia*. Only a several decades long rule of the Basarab family, who also controlled Wallachia, could have changed the name of this region.<sup>44</sup>

The northern Moldavian area came under the focus of the Polish king, who wished to seize the opportunity to extend his hegemony here. Historians do not agree on whether and how Casimir III intervened in this region. In his *Annales*, Jan Długosz notes that, upon Ștefan's death (a local voivode in Moldavia), fierce power struggles ensued between his sons, Ștefan and Petru. The latter prevailed with the help of the population and a group of so-called *provinciales Hungarorum*, while the former sought safe haven from the Polish king, and also asked for his help. In exchange for promised vassal status, Casimir gave Ștefan an army in 1359, which was however defeated by Petru in the battle of the *Plonini* woods,<sup>45</sup> which scholars located in the Land of Șepenit, in

<sup>40</sup> Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, pp. 80–84.

<sup>41</sup> Papacostea, "Triumful luptei," pp. 48–49; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 78–85. Giurescu believes that the land under Hungarian rule spread towards the Prut (Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 64).

<sup>42</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 128–132.

<sup>44</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 75–76; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, p. 298. The name Basarabia was extended to the entire region between the Prut and the Dniester by the Russian administration, which seized this territory after 1821.

<sup>45</sup> Ioannis Długossi, *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae*, vol. IX, ed. S. Budkowa et al. (Warsaw, 1978), pp. 299–301. Details in Matei Cazacu, "Lucius Apronianus = Roman I<sup>er</sup>, prince de Moldavie? À propos de l'expédition polonaise de 1359 en Moldavie et de son écho en Pologne au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Buletinul Bibliotecii Române* (Freiburg) vol. 8 (1980–1981), pp. 257–272.

northern Moldavia.<sup>46</sup> This event captured the attention of all historians researching 14th century Moldavian history, who either claim this battle actually occurred in 1359, or date it later. Victor Spinei and Șerban Papacostea tend to believe it was indeed waged in 1359. The former historian believes that the conflict involved members of a local dynasty, while the latter suggests a first conflict between Hungarian and Polish interests over Moldavia that Louis solved in his favour.<sup>47</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei dates the battle with the Poles in 1367, Constantin Rezachevici in 1368, and Constantin Cihodaru in 1369.<sup>48</sup> The two rivals are hard to identify, since many later Moldavian rulers are called Ștefan or Petru. If we were to accept that these voivodes existed in 1359, we would also show that the power struggle east of the Carpathians also involved local boyars. Such “influential figures” (*potestes*) did exist, and they were mentioned in 1332, when it is said that they took over the goods of the former Cuman bishopric.<sup>49</sup> Instead the 1367–1369 versions assume that Ștefan and Petru were members of the new family ruling over Moldavia. However, the discovery of new sources will shed light on this controversy, one of the many on the dawn of Moldavia.

Louis’ political and religious goals aimed much higher. The Hungarian king sought to extend and reinforce his authority up to the mouths of the Danube, an action which was part of the vast plan to bring his dominion from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.<sup>50</sup> A new expedition east of the Carpathians also included an army led by a Romanian from Maramureș, Dragoș.<sup>51</sup> His arrival assumed mythical

<sup>46</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, “Din istoria luptei pentru independența Moldovei în veacul al XIV-lea. Primele lupte pentru independență ale Țărilor Române,” *SRDI*, vol. IX, no. 4 (1956), p. 103; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, p. 457.

<sup>47</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 343–348; Papacostea, “Triumful luptei,” pp. 55–56, note 52.

<sup>48</sup> Șt. S. Gorovei, “Îndreptări cronologice la istoria Moldovei din veacul al XIV-lea,” *AIAT*, vol. X (1973), pp. 115–118; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 97–99, 146–147; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 432–442; C. Cihodaru, “Tradiția letopisetelor și informația documentară despre luptele politice din Moldova în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea,” *AIAT*, vol. V (1968), pp. 12–18. See also P. P. Panaitescu, “Din istoria luptei,” pp. 110–113; Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 241–244; Dragoș Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei în cartografia europeană veche (cca. 1395–1789),” in *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova*, vol. I, part 4, ed. Dragoș Moldovanu (Iași, 2005), pp. LV–LXI.

<sup>49</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 45, doc. 22.

<sup>50</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Ștefan*, pp. 159–167.

<sup>51</sup> There were several knezes named Dragoș in Maramureș, and it is hard to ascertain which one crossed over into Moldavia (Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, pp. 154, 225;

proportions in the oldest Moldavian chronicles: “In 6867 (1359) came Dragoș voivode from the Hungarian Country, from Maramureș, to hunt an auroch, and he ruled for two years.”<sup>52</sup> Oral and written tradition would record this event under the Romanian term of *descălecat*, even though sources show this concept to branch out even further, as we will later reveal.<sup>53</sup> The date of Dragoș crossing the mountains is also vastly debated. Except for the *Cronica moldo-polonă*, which states that Dragoș had arrived in 1352, all other Moldavian chronicles note 1359 as the year of his arrival. Victor Spinei and Șerban Papacostea argue for the accuracy of the chronicled date, while Ștefan S. Gorovei believes the event can be dated even earlier, near the time of the battles led by Andrew Lăckfi east of the Carpathians.<sup>54</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu and Petre P. Panaitescu support the version in the *Cronica moldo-polonă*.<sup>55</sup> Another scholar, Constantin Rezachevici, believes that Dragoș arrived during the first Hungarian raids east of the Carpathians, in 1347.<sup>56</sup> Leaving all controversy aside, historians are in agreement when describing Dragoș as a representative of the Hungarian king. Following his military incursion, Dragoș became the ruler of a new political structure in north-western Moldavia, which was meant to defend the kingdom from the east and was also a foothold towards the Galician Rus'.<sup>57</sup> Dragoș died and was buried in Moldavia. The king consented to let his son, Sas, take the rule. The authority of royal representatives, gained by force, did not fail to stir opposition among the local aristocracy.<sup>58</sup> One of their revolts created the opportunity for one of the king's opponents, Bogdan of Cuhea, former voivode of Maramureș, to cross the mountains alongside his allies. Following some fierce battles, Balc, son of Sas, is defeated and chased away,

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Marius Diaconescu, “Dragoș “descălecătorul” Moldovei, între legendă și realitate,” in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania* (Satu Mare, 1997), pp. 80–87.

<sup>52</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 6, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Literally, “descălecat” means “to dismount”. A perceptive interpretation of the meanings of the term (“foundation”, “organization”, “colonisation”, “conquest”) in Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 45–68. See also Brătianu, *Tradiția istorică*, pp. 119–152.

<sup>54</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 349–358; Papacostea, “Triumful luptei,” pp. 53–56; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 89–92.

<sup>55</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 167, 177; Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 310–311; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 301–302.

<sup>56</sup> Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 414–415.

<sup>57</sup> Papacostea, “Triumful luptei,” p. 49; Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei,” pp. XXXVIII–XXXIX.

<sup>58</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 75, doc. 41.



with Bogdan becoming the new Moldavian ruler and the founder of a new dynasty.<sup>59</sup> If we were to count the years that Dragoș and Sas reigned, Bogdan's arrival is recorded in chronicles in 1365, a year that historians have discarded.<sup>60</sup> Those who believe Dragoș came to Moldavia in 1352 claim Bogdan crossed the mountains in 1359,<sup>61</sup> while other historians indicate 1363<sup>62</sup> or 1364,<sup>63</sup> either way, before February 1365, when King Louis I transfers Bogdan's domains in Maramureș to another noble and practically admits defeat on the Moldavian front.<sup>64</sup> We will admit that King Louis' authority was imposed east of the Carpathians from 1345–1347 on. In 1359, sources testify to the king's authority being challenged locally, albeit unsuccessfully.<sup>65</sup> We will then witness the crossing of the mountains by Bogdan and his followers (c. 1363–1364). The arrival of the Maramureș Romanians was also due to the pressures that the king subjected them to. He sought to replace the old local offices of knez and voivode with a *comes*, who was more reliant on royal power. Religious pressures were also added to this, since the Romanians in Maramureș were Orthodox. The king wielded a very convincing instrument: written confirmation of land ownership, sparking discontent in some groups that preferred to leave in a known direction: beyond the mountains. Political and economic ties between the west and the east sides of the Carpathians do not date back to this period, but to previous centuries.<sup>66</sup>

The major role played by Bogdan in the east-Carpathian area is also seen in how the Turks called the country: *Kara-Bogdan*. Bogdan's instatement must be regarded as the final episode in a more complex process, which led to the creation of Moldavia, a new state in south-eastern Europe. Even if it was poorly documented by sources, the local society, essentially Romanian and Orthodox, also contributed to this process.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>59</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 80, doc. 43.

<sup>60</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 44, 48, 55, 60.

<sup>61</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 311–313; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 68–69; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, pp. 304–307; Popa, *Țara Maramureșului*, pp. 224–230.

<sup>62</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 90–92; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 429–430.

<sup>63</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 368–369; Papacostea, “Triumful luptei,” pp. 56–58.

<sup>64</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 80, doc. 43.

<sup>65</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 75, doc. 41.

<sup>66</sup> Papacostea, “Triumful luptei,” pp. 47–48.

<sup>67</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 375–378.

*The emergence of towns*

Historians investigated the sources for traces of political structures that predated the full emergence of Moldavia. Among them was the *câmp*, which covered several villages on a river valley: the most familiar are Câmpulung, on the Moldova river valley, and Câmpul lui Dragoș, on the Bistrița valley.<sup>68</sup> Further north, sources mention Șepeniț as a land or *terra* between the rivers of Ceremuș, Prut and Dniester, separated from Moldavia by a vast forest (*bucovină*). It initially depended on the Galician Rus', then on Poland and became a part of Moldavia probably as a grant from the Polish king to his new vassal, Petru I (1375–1391), or following a 1388 loan from Petru that the king had not paid back.<sup>69</sup> Other scholars have seen the *codri*, the vast forested areas inhabited by Romanians, as areas of local authority. In Transylvania, sources testify to the “forest of the Romanians and the Pechenegs” and the “forest of the Maramureș.” Moldavia also has numerous *codri*, such as those of Hârlău, Iași, Tigheci, Orhei or Lăpușna, where some autonomies of the locals probably survived in a Mongol-controlled area.<sup>70</sup> A different theory surfaced in recent times, which claimed that groups of Alans were located in the area east of the Carpathians. They collaborated with the Mongols, who had allegedly settled them in the northern half of Moldavia, where it is believed they were present in the settlements at Baia, Suceava and Iași. Virgil Ciocâltan believes that Moldavia followed an older Alan country.<sup>71</sup> His theory relies only on narrative sources, however, and requires confirmation from archaeological excavations.

Research into the administrative make-up of Moldavia provides other illuminating data on its territorial and political status before the emergence of the state. We cannot accurately assess the surface of

<sup>68</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 36–40; Constantin Burac, *Ținuturile Țării Moldovei până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 2002), pp. 15–16.

<sup>69</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, pp. 603–605, doc. 164; p. 661, doc. C; p. 706, doc. 203. C. Racoviță, “Începuturile suzeranității polone asupra Moldovei (1387–1432),” *RIR*, vol. X (1940), pp. 296–297; Panaitescu, “Din istoria luptei,” p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria pădurii românești din cele mai vechi timpuri până astăzi*, 3rd ed. by Radu Cărneci (Bucharest, 2004), pp. 30–32, 74–84; Popa, “Premisele cristalizării,” pp. 38–39.

<sup>71</sup> Virgil Ciocâltan, “Alanii și începuturile statelor românești,” *RI*, vol. VI, no. 11–12 (1995), pp. 939–951; Renate Möhlenkamp, “Contribuții la istoria orașului Iași în secolele XIV–XV,” *AIIAI*, vol. XXI (1984), pp. 62–67.

Bogdan I's domain. He ruled over the north-western lands between the Carpathians and the Dniester, possibly up to Ceremuș, but we can only guess what the boundaries were. His realm did however spread over the future county of Suceava, one of the largest in medieval Moldavia. It probably owed its unusual size to several local knezats, one on the valley of the Moldova river, which also lent its name to the country, and another on the valley of the Suceava and Upper Siret rivers. The large number of domains in the area (Bădeuți, Volovăț, Rădăuți etc.) which later came under the ruler's control is also uncommon. There were several powerful boyars here. Some of them pledged loyalty and collaborated with the envoys of the Hungarian kings, others did not. The lands of the collaborators were later seized. The Suceava county is the political core of the Moldavian principality.<sup>72</sup>

Constantin C. Giurescu believed that Bogdan I also ruled over the future counties of Neamț, Bacău and Trotuș, up to the river Oituz.<sup>73</sup> His claim was recently questioned by Dragoș Moldovanu who, going by the substantial Hungarian population groups in the area, believes this region to have been under Hungarian rule until the end of the 14th century.<sup>74</sup> The few sources preserved also suggest that the land of the Milcovia bishopric, south of the Trotuș, originally depended on Hungary. The kingdom's monopoly over the area also explains the political silence between Moldavia and Wallachia until Petru I's reign.<sup>75</sup> In the meanwhile (c. 1375), the area fell under the control of Wallachian rulers, who kept it until 1417–1423. Further east, Bogdan or his follower, Lațcu (c. 1367/1368–1375), gained control over the future counties Dorohoi and Hârlău. It was probably under them that the conquest of the Soroca and Iași counties began. Later sources place the two in the Lower Country (Rom. *Țara de Jos*), which approximately spread over the eastern half of Moldavia. The Hotin county allows a less straightforward explanation. It was probably conquered,

<sup>72</sup> Cihodaru, "Constituirea statului," pp. 64–65; Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," p. XL. For the names assigned to Moldavia in sources (*Moldova, Rosvolahia, Bogdania, Valachia Minor, Kara-Bogdan*), see Armbruster, "Terminologia," pp. 251–259; Victor Spinei, "Terminologia politică a spațiului est-carpatic în perioada constituirii statului feudal de sine stătător," in *Stat, societate, națiune. Interpretări istorice*, eds. Nicolae Edroiu, Aurel Răduțiu, Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj, 1982), pp. 66–79.

<sup>73</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 313–314.

<sup>74</sup> Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," p. XLIX.

<sup>75</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan, întemeietorii Moldovei* (Bucharest, 1973), p. 156.

but without the stronghold which bore its name, since it was under Polish rule. The Roman county is also less detailed; chronicler Miron Costin places it in the Upper Country (Rom. *Țara de Sus*), while Dimitrie Cantemir, in the Lower one; the former alternative seems more plausible.<sup>76</sup>

Despite all the assumptions made by historians, it is unclear whether and where did a certain *Demetrius, principis Tartarorum*, exert his authority north of the Danube. In 1368, he is noted as engaged in trade negotiations with the king of Hungary. He probably controlled the southern half of the land between the Prut and the Dniester and the harbours by the sea.<sup>77</sup> Archaeology shows that in 1367–1368, the minting of Mongol coins stops in Orheiul Vechi, a town coming from mid 13th century under the khan's rule. This abrupt interruption in coinage shows that Mongol power had been or was about to be eliminated from here. Moldavia expands further under Petru I and Roman I (c. 1391/1392–1394).<sup>78</sup> In 1392, prince Roman was a self titled ruler “from mountains to the sea,” so the country had broadly reached its natural boundaries: the eastern and northern boundaries was the river Dniester, the south-eastern one was the Black Sea, and the western one, the Carpathians.<sup>79</sup> The southern one was still exposed; it was here that Wallachian rulers held Kilia and the land of the Milcovia bishopric.<sup>80</sup> Moldavia would take over this territory, following the gradual retracing of boundaries under Ștefan I (1394–1399), then under Alexandru the Good (1400–1432).<sup>81</sup> During Ștefan the Great's reign (1457–1504), the border with Wallachia is set on the rivers Siret and Milcov, and it will be kept as such in the next centuries as well.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Miron Costin, *Poema polonă*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 216; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 154–159.

<sup>77</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 90, doc. 49.

<sup>78</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 379–385.

<sup>79</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.

<sup>80</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 36, doc. 15; DRH, D, I, p. 119, doc. 73; Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei,” p. XXXV.

<sup>81</sup> Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1913), p. 334, doc. 146; DRH, A, I, p. 77, doc. 53; D, I, p. 282, doc. 181; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 87–88; Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldo-polone,” pp. 101–102.

<sup>82</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 19; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 101, 106; Șerban Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 111–115; Anton Paragină, *Habitatul medieval la curbura exterioară a Carpaților în secolele X–XV* (Brăila, 2002), pp. 101–111; Iosipescu, “Vrancea, Putna,” pp. 205–220.

In his external affairs, Lațcu wished to avoid an unbalanced conflict with his mighty neighbours north and west. He initially sought Polish support. The Franciscan missionaries reported to the pope the ruler's wish of converting to Catholicism. Negotiations with the bishops in Poland lasted until 1370.<sup>83</sup> The ruler converted, and the Catholic bishopric of Siret, created in 1371, had a bishop sent over from Poland, Andrew Iastrzebiec from Kraków.<sup>84</sup> In 1371, the pope appoints a bishop for the bishopric of Milcovia as well, Nicolas of Buda, sent over from Hungary.<sup>85</sup> In the winter of 1370, Louis I of Hungary was also crowned king of Poland, so Lațcu could no longer avoid becoming his subject.<sup>86</sup> The conflict was sparked by Lațcu, who renounce his commitment to Rome, as evidenced by his burial in the Orthodox Church of St Nicholas in Rădăuți. An army of King Louis' vassal from Galician Rus', Władysław of Opole, intervenes in Moldavia, but the outcome is unknown to this day.<sup>87</sup> To avoid an even greater dependence on Hungary, Lațcu's follower, Petru I, refocused his politics on Wallachia and especially on Lithuania, then Poland. In 1387, in Lviv, Petru acknowledges his vassal status towards the new king of Poland, Władysław Jagiełło.<sup>88</sup> One year later, Petru gave Władysław a generous loan (3000 silver roubles), and received as guarantee the territory of Pokuttya, in north-western Moldavia.<sup>89</sup> Petru was also the one to erect a system of stone fortifications and to mint the first coins.<sup>90</sup>

On a much more restricted level than in Wallachia, the territorial forms of some of the older knezats were continued in Moldavia by the counties. It is reasonable to assume that, as the state expanded, the new rulers kept the old forms of local political organization, which gradually became administrative units. Where institutions are con-

<sup>83</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 160, doc. 124.

<sup>84</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 168, doc. 131; Ján Sýkora, "Poziția internațională a Moldovei în timpul lui Lațcu: luptă pentru independență și afirmare în plan extern," *RDI*, vol. XXIX, no. 8 (1976), pp. 1142–1145; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 143–144.

<sup>85</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 174, doc. 133.

<sup>86</sup> Sýkora, "Poziția internațională," pp. 1135–1141.

<sup>87</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 127–132.

<sup>88</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 599, doc. 162.

<sup>89</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, pp. 603–605, doc. 164.

<sup>90</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, pp. 317–320, 347–355. Petru I and Roman I received the family name of Mușat in error, since they were mistaken for the sons of a certain Mușat. This name stems from sources misinterpreted at the end of the Middle Ages, Petru and Roman actually being the sons of one Mușata or Margaret (clarifications in Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 105–107).

cerned, the Middle Ages were a conservative time, and many structures underwent little change over centuries. The number and shape of Moldavian counties persisted until modern times, with only few modifications.<sup>91</sup> However, Moldavia does display one particular feature, since only one part of the counties borrowed the name of the river along which they emerged. We have mentioned here Suceava, which is also joined by the counties of Putna, Troțuș, Tutova, Bârlad and Lăpușna. Counties that borrowed their name from the main settlement are even more numerous. The term of *ținut* (county) itself shows that they relied on a centre, and this is another argument for the age of towns in Moldavia, which, *as settlements*, had predated the foundation of the medieval state.<sup>92</sup> Of all the 27 counties that Moldavia had in the 15th century, only eight were not named after their administrative centres. Local features were downplayed by the centralization pressures of the future rulers. Several small regions did keep an status of autonomy: Vrancea, Câmpulung and Tigheci.<sup>93</sup> They were integrated into Moldavia as part of a compromise. In Vrancea's case, the inhabitants accepted the new dominion, provided it acknowledged several former rights. In Câmpulung and Tigheci, these rights were exchanged for military obligations.<sup>94</sup>

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Towns emerged in Moldavia only when the economic and political conditions were right. Despite the general insecurity in the vast lands that spread east of the Carpathians, and up to the steppes north of the Black Sea, trade was still practiced, and it was not overlooked under Cuman rule either. The rivers that crossed the area, from the Danube and up to the Dnieper, were the commercial axes along which trading was carried out. Weapons, tools, religious items, fine cloth, pepper and other luxury items were brought from the Levant in exchange for

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<sup>91</sup> The oldest detailed map of Moldavia, which also includes counties, is Dimitrie Cantemir's map, with around 800 river, village, and town names (G. Vâlsan, "Harta Moldovei de Dimitrie Cantemir," AARMSI, 3rd series, vol. 6 (1927), p. 204).

<sup>92</sup> As settlements and not as towns, as Giurescu believes in *Istoria românilor*, vol. II p. 278.

<sup>93</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 300–301.

<sup>94</sup> Papacosteia, *Geneza statului*, p. 109; Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," p. LI.

local products, such as livestock, fish, skins, furs, and wax. The Chersonesos harbour was very much active in this regard.<sup>95</sup> What's more, the persistence of ceramic as technique, shape, and ornament in the entire east-Carpathian area, can only be explained by its circulation, also suggesting craftsmanship within the same bounds.<sup>96</sup> Evidence to the involvement of the local communities in this trade is given by the discovered coins. A good many of them were Byzantine, indicating that, until the end of the 12th century, part of the above-mentioned goods went the way of the Constantinople Empire. Coins issued by the Arpadian Kings were only sparsely discovered. A unique discovery, however, is the Hotin treasure trove, with 850 Central-European coins issued in a vast period (latter half of the 12th century–c. 1230). The presence of a merchant or local ruler with so many coins in northern Moldavia shows the area to have been appealing to merchants even before the Mongol invasion.<sup>97</sup> Travellers followed a road linking the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea (the future *via tartarica* or “the Mongol road”).

Even though the short-term effects of the 1241 Mongol invasion were negative, due to material and human losses, the long-term one was a certain stability in the area, which also impacted its economics and its trade. The Mongols sought to derive profit from trade, so they encouraged merchants to use the trade routes which crossed the lands of the Golden Horde.<sup>98</sup> Along with Central-Asian Muslim merchants, Eastern Europe also had very active Italian traders in Crimea and in other harbours by the Black Sea, as well as Russian traders from Novgorod, Tver, Pskov or Moscow. Novgorod was an outpost of the German Hansa, so the Mongol world had the Russians to mediate its trade with Central Europe. In the 14th century, this trade brings even more under its scope the merchants in Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, and even Hungary.<sup>99</sup> This is the climate whereby merchant traffic on “the Mongol road” increases. This route began in Poland, from Kraków or Sandomierz, crossed Lviv and the Galician Rus', followed the middle Dniester valley through Podolia, and led towards the Crimea harbours.

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<sup>95</sup> Spinei, *Realități etnice*, pp. 133–134.

<sup>96</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>97</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 122–126.

<sup>98</sup> Matei, *Geneza și evoluție*, pp. 79–84; Ciocîltan, *Mongolii*, pp. 22–48.

<sup>99</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 342–344.

One of its alternate routes led south, along the Dniester, and reached the *Maurocastrum* (near Cetatea Albă).<sup>100</sup>

In the hierarchy of European roads, the “Mongol road” is among the ones of continental significance, just like the one linking Buda to Constantinople via Belgrade. The only route linking the European inland to the East, along with the two roads, was the Danube. The road from Buda to the Black Sea, that crossed Transylvania and Wallachia, was a regional one. In Moldavia, before mid 14th century, there were numerous local roads, which linked the major centres that had local rulers or intense trading. As with Wallachia, these roads followed the river valleys. Between the Carpathians and the Dniester, two rivers were followed by ancient roads: the Prut and the Siret. Our claim is supported by the fact that the natural flow of the river facilitates communication between northern and southern Moldavia. You had to follow one of these routes to reach the Danube from northern Moldavia, since the geography of the area did not allow for any easy passage west to east. Constantin C. Giurescu even goes so far as to suggest that the road from the Danube towards the north, probably on the Siret river, had been used by Byzantine, Arab, and Russian merchants. The presence of Byzantine coins in Moldavia supports this claim, but we have no true measure of the intensity of the trade practiced by these merchants.<sup>101</sup>

Moldavia’s emergence as a state led to changes in the status and the path followed by the “Mongol road.” Its alternate route on the middle and lower Dniester valley would gradually shift its centre of gravity on the upper reaches of the Siret river.<sup>102</sup> This road gained significance when Polish merchants began using it, specifically when the Polish king granted support to a town on the other end of the road, Lviv. The town existed on medieval maps even before its integration into Poland, indicating that it was already actively involved in regional trade.<sup>103</sup> Casimir III rebuilt it in 1356 based on “German law” and then granted the merchants in Nuremberg the right to do business in Poland, up to Lviv. Western products that German tradesmen brought

<sup>100</sup> See the discussion in case studies, Cetatea Albă.

<sup>101</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 32, 58–60.

<sup>102</sup> Petre P. Panaitescu, “Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în evul mediu,” in *Interpretări românești*, p. 83 (French ed.: P. P. Panaitescu, “La route commerciale de Pologne à la Mer Noire au Moyen Âge,” *RIR*, vol. III (1933), pp. 172–193); Gorovci, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 187, 200.

<sup>103</sup> *Sea Charts*, map 7.



could thus be exchanged for goods brought by Eastern merchants on a route alternative to that of the Mediterranean.<sup>104</sup> The road probably becomes more stable and safer after 1366–1367, when Polish control over the former Galician Rus' consolidates. In 1380, King Louis I, now ruler of Poland as well (1370–1382) grants Lviv staple right, so the town begins controlling the goods transported through here. Kraków challenges this right in 1400 and wins, gaining King Władysław's consent in 1403 to trade in the lands of *Valahia* (*ad partes Valachie*).<sup>105</sup> The granting of staple right to Lviv confirms that the road leading to the Black Sea through Moldavia was a major road. Ștefan Andreescu recently questioned the Moldavian connection, specifying that the 1380 staple right made no mention of the road crossing it, but only that leading to *Tartaria*. We believe that his assertion is not exclusive of any alternate route through Moldavia, as it does not exclude other possibilities as well. It was exactly this heightened trade towards the Black Sea that determined the Lvivans to demand and obtain staple right. Several years had to pass for the new route to attract more merchants, as Andreescu himself agrees.<sup>106</sup>

We do not know which ruler is credited with the first measures that attracted foreign merchants from Lviv to the road within Moldavia. We cannot rule out Lațcu, who inaugurated a Catholic bishopric in Siret, a town located on this road. The Siret customs house is mentioned under his follower, Petru I, in 1384, which indicated that a well thought-out customs system already existed.<sup>107</sup> In 1386, another document mentions some German merchants from Lviv and Kraków that had been robbed in Moldavia.<sup>108</sup> Another clue that merchants followed this road during Petru's reign is provided by the large amount of money he lent to King Władysław Jagiełło in 1388.<sup>109</sup> The Moldavian prince could not afford lending 3000 silver roubles (equivalent of 600.000 asprons), probably a small part of his income, had he not cashed in on

<sup>104</sup> Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews," pp. 354–355; Nagy, "Transcontinental Trade," pp. 349–350.

<sup>105</sup> *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego we Lwowie*, tom III (Lviv, 1872), p. 148, doc. LXXVI; Racoviță, "Începuturile suzeranității," pp. 307–308; Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial," p. 86.

<sup>106</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 16–18; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 199–200.

<sup>107</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

<sup>108</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 284–285.

<sup>109</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, pp. 603–605, doc. 164.

major customs duties.<sup>110</sup> A very important treasure trove of 336 silver coins, partly issued by Bohemian kings, was buried in Siret at the end of the 14th century, and shows that trade here already required significant amounts.<sup>111</sup> No data on possible customs exemptions granted by rulers to foreign merchants exist until the 1408 privilege.

The changes of the “Mongol road” must be connected with change in status of the other town in its terminal point, Cetatea Albă, which became part of Moldavia.<sup>112</sup> However, we must not see the “activation” of the “Moldavian road” as mandatory neither when Cetatea Albă was claimed by this principality, nor when the staple right to Lviv was granted. For many merchants, this road was only a stage. After crossing Moldavia, they continued their journey from Cetatea Albă (or Tighina) towards Caffa and Mongol-controlled towns, as the privilege granted to Polish merchants by Alexandru the Good in 1408 states.<sup>113</sup> Cetatea Albă was not necessarily the end-point of their travels. The new route was preferred by Polish merchants, since it bypassed Mongolian customs points and was much safer, at least where its Moldavian leg was concerned.<sup>114</sup>

The terminology begins giving precedence to the “Moldavian road” or the “Romanian road” (*via Walachiensis*), as it was called, over the “Mongol road.”<sup>115</sup> The towns of Cernăuți, Siret, Suceava, Hârlău, Târgul Frumos, Iași, Lăpușna and Tighina would develop along it. The road which followed the Dniester valley loses importance, but is still used. The road through inland Moldavia was not the work of chance. It probably covered local roads, where future towns already existed, at least as major settlements. In the Middle Ages, but also later on, roads needed landmarks, stop-overs and trading posts, but these landmarks existed already in these settlements.

The 1408 document is the first detailed reference of the roads merchants followed in Moldavia. From Transylvania, travellers could reach Moldavia via one of the mountain passes: Oituz to Brașov or

<sup>110</sup> One silver rouble was worth 200 Greek asprons (Panaitescu, “Drumul comercial,” pp. 90–91).

<sup>111</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 261.

<sup>112</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 200–210.

<sup>113</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; Věra Hrochová, “Le commerce des Génois à Caffa avec les régions russes et polonaises aux XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in *Aspects des Balkans médiévaux* (Praha, 1989), pp. 158–159.

<sup>114</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 200–201.

<sup>115</sup> Racoviță, “Începuturile suzeranității,” p. 309.

Moldovița to Rodna and Bistrița.<sup>116</sup> Sources reveal that the most travelled pass was that in Oituz. This pass was also used by the Mongols in 1241, indicating it had been used for a long time now. Andrew Lăckfi's armies probably used it too, along with other Hungarian troops that sought to bring this area under Louis' reign. The Oituz road allowed passage by cart, unlike other mountain passes which could only be negotiated with beasts of burden. From the end of the 14th century on, western cloth was brought into Moldavia via Oituz, as mentioned in privileges granted by rulers to the Brașov merchants.<sup>117</sup> After reaching out from the mountain range, the road followed the Trotuș river valley and led to that of the Siret, in Adjud or Bacău. It split, leading to northern or southern Moldavia. Many merchants headed to Wallachia, the Danube, and the sea, the final point in their journey being Brăila or Kilia. Others set towards the towns which grew in northern Moldavia.<sup>118</sup> Ever since the latter part of the 14th century, a series of secondary roads linked the major towns we mentioned between them: a road followed the Bârlad river valley, another the Prut waterway, others, the valleys of the Bistrița, Moldova, etc, which were joined by the roads linking Hârlău to Botoșani, Dorohoi and Hotin or the one linking Suceava, Botoșani, Ștefănești and Soroca. On these roads, most towns are a day's journey one from the other.

We have insisted on a presentation of roads, since they cannot be separated from towns. Regardless of the era or area approached, there is no town without a road. Also, no towns without a nearby body of water existed in the Middle Ages. Most urban centres in Moldavia emerged on fords, in places that allowed water passage, as the travellers transiting Moldavia had noticed. In Trotuș, there was a ford of the river Trotuș; in Pietra lui Crăciun and Bacău, Bistrița's fords; in Roman, Moldova's ford; in Suceava, Suceava's ford; in Siret and Adjud, Siret's fords; in Cernăuți, Prut's ford; Iași, Bahlui's ford; Bârlad and Tecuci, Bârlad's fords; Hotin, Soroca and Tighina, Dniester's fords.<sup>119</sup>

Geography had its say in the distribution of towns in Moldavia. Along with the nearby river, the places of emergence for towns reveal

<sup>116</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, I, p. 80, doc. 55; p. 385, doc. 272; D, I, p. 189, doc. 117.

<sup>117</sup> DRH, D, I, pp. 342–343, pp. 245–246.

<sup>118</sup> Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial," p. 84.

<sup>119</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. 3, pp. 208–209, 215–217; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, II, p. 147.

that each supplied a certain area, usually the valley of that river and its surroundings. Features of the landscape led all towns, except those on the Black Sea shore, to emerge in hilled up areas. No town appeared within the mountains. Except for salt, Moldavia had no significant mineral resources, so we will not encounter any mining towns shaped as those in Transylvania or Slovakia. The only ones that partially fit into this category are Baia, whose name suggests the presence of certain mines, and Trotuș, close to salt mines.<sup>120</sup> Where some rivers (and roads) exited the mountain range, there lay Putna, Piatra lui Crăciun and Neamț. The next cluster of towns was on the lower reaches of mountain rivers, close to where they flowed into the Siret: Adjud, Bacău, Roman, Suceava, Siret. On the edges of Dealul Mare-Hârlău, that separated the Siret valley and the Moldavian Plateau, other towns emerged: Botoșani, Hârlău, Cotnari and Târgul Frumos. Within the Moldavian Plateau, there is Iași, Vaslui, Bârlad and Tecuci. The town of Galați would later emerge where the Siret joined the Danube.<sup>121</sup> The following towns grow along the Prut river: Cernăuți, Ștefănești, Huși, Fălciu and Reni, most of them graduating to towns only later, in the 15th–16th centuries. Towns east of the Prut were much sparser. Within this area, there is only Lăpușna and Orhei, and, on the country's edges, on the Dniester, Hotin, Soroca, and Tighina emerge, and at the river mouth, Cetatea Albă. Kilia was located near the point where the Danube flowed into the sea. The last two, along with Orheiul Vechi and Costești, stood out since they developed as towns in another political climate than other Moldavian towns. There is a higher urban density in the north-west part; this may be accounted for by local conditions and by the way Moldavia emerged. The political core of the country was here, on the valleys of the Moldova, Suceava, and Siret rivers, the south and eastern parts being a future addition. The territory between the Prut and the Dniester was urbanized only in the least degree, due to its vulnerability to Mongol (then Kazak) attacks, which lasted until the 18th century.

When discussing Wallachia, we have revealed the significant role that the political and military factors had in urbanization. The strongholds of the knezes and voivodes before and after Wallachia emerged,

<sup>120</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

<sup>121</sup> M. Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1958), pp. 205, 216, 267.

coalesced groups of specialized personnel around them, both traders and craftsmen, who created settlements that went on to become towns. The political element had its importance in urban emergence, since any power centre attracted money and generated income. For Moldavia, the data on such residences prior to c. 1350 are significantly fewer. Mongol domination, whether manifest or not, did influence the political mechanism of Moldavia. Even though archaeological research intensified in the past decades, specific traces of fortifications that predate the latter half of the 14th century are not so quick in turning up. Some fortified locations had definitely existed here, but they were fewer and were immediately related to Mongol rulers and their representatives.<sup>122</sup> The local aristocracy, as represented by those *potestes* mentioned in 1332, did obviously not reside outdoors, and had fortified residences.<sup>123</sup> The fortified structures created by the king of Hungary and his representatives after 1345–1347 (in Baia, Siret, Piatra lui Crăciun and Trotuș) had a major part in this process. Several decades later, as the first rulers extended their grasp over Moldavia, they took over the more important settlements and included them in their network of residences. This applies to the strongholds mentioned above, those in Suceava and Iași, but also those probably in Hârlău, Dorohoi and Bârlad. Hotin is a special case: here, research indicated that the stone fortifications are from earlier times, specifically, the latter half of the 13th century. The stronghold and the urban settlement nearby were located in an area influenced by both the Romanian-inhabited area, and the Galician Rus'. Romanian historians challenge Hotin's reliance on the Galician Rus', but this cannot be ruled out completely, at least where the period prior to mid 14th century is concerned.<sup>124</sup> After 1366–1367, the stronghold came under Polish control,<sup>125</sup> and was later transferred to the ruler of Moldavia as tenure after the pledge of allegiance to the Polish king, in 1387.<sup>126</sup> Starting with Petru I's reign, the stronghold system in Moldavia is completed by building new ones, larger or smaller. Most are near major settlements, which would later become towns: Suceava, Neamț, Roman, Bacău, Vaslui,

<sup>122</sup> The lack of any major fortifications in this area is also explained by the Mongols forbidding local rulers to build them. This avoided the creation of possible resistance cells in the area (Spinei, *Realități etnice*, p. 100; Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 234).

<sup>123</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 45, doc. 22.

<sup>124</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 265.

<sup>125</sup> Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 155–173.

<sup>126</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 706, doc. 203.

Huși and Soroca.<sup>127</sup> In two cases, there is a stronghold near town and a house of the ruler within it, the latter with only a minor military role: in Suceava and in Neamț. Strongholds, along with privileges granted to local communities, may be regarded as factors that accelerated the urbanization of nearby settlements.<sup>128</sup>

Several boyars are mentioned in the first internal texts documenting the existence of some of the future towns. In most cases, they feature as witnesses, all documents being issued by rulers. Such boyars are noted in Hârlău, Siret, Bârlad, Hotin, Neamț, Dorohoi and Vaslui.<sup>129</sup> A few theories regarding the status of these boyars have been advanced, but two stand out:

1. these boyars are continuations of the families of former local rulers;
2. they are officials elected by the prince.

Both theories are valid.<sup>130</sup> As Moldavia gained new ground, the princes surely subjected the local aristocracy, whether by sword or negotiation. We find it hard to accept that this aristocracy did not exist, and we also do not believe it had not been integrated in the new boyar layers of Moldavian society. The ones who bowed to princely authority had their domains and new offices acknowledged by the rulers. Where local boyars rebelled against the new order, they were obviously replaced by the trustworthy appointees of the ruler. Since sources mention all these boyars only as witnesses, it is very difficult to identify their origin, whether newly or recently instated. The fact that they are associated to a stronghold, a town or an urbanizing settlement, leads us to believe they were connected to the ruler. The Siret boyars, for example, could only be officials appointed by the ruler, since this town definitely belonged to him. We may connect these boyars, apparently without office, and the judges in towns, who emerge in the 15th century. These judges had legal and fiscal offices and we believe they were the link

<sup>127</sup> Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 459–473.

<sup>128</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, pp. 72–77, 92–93.

<sup>129</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 601, doc. 163; p. 628, doc. 175; DRH, A, I, p. 7, doc. 6; p. 11, doc. 9; p. 19, doc. 13; p. 30, doc. 22; p. 79, doc. 54.

<sup>130</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Istoria în palimpsest: Moldova dinainte de Moldova,” *RI*, vol. VI, no. 1–2 (1995), pp. 170–171.

to the specialised officials of the prince who later appear in counties and towns.<sup>131</sup>

Demographics had their importance, all towns developing in richly populated areas. As with Wallachia, Moldavia also had rural settlements that took over the purpose of trading post for a certain region, usually for the river valleys where they stood, also covering the demand of the aristocracy and the population.<sup>132</sup> A commercial purpose partly explains why some of these settlements were termed *târg* in popular terms, compounded by the name of the rivers they were on. There was a *târg* on the river Moldova (Baia), another on Bahlui (Hârlău), but also *târgs* for Putna, Troțuș, Siret, Suceava, Bârlad, Vaslui, Sărata or Lăpușna rivers.<sup>133</sup> Petre P. Panaitescu has made this compelling remark: the *târgs* on the river valleys first developed on the upper reaches of the rivers, on higher ground, and only later in the valleys. In Wallachia, Argeș is the first town noted on the river by the same name; Pitești comes after it. In Moldavia, there are similar situations on the river Moldova: one *târg* in Baia, another one in Roman; on the river Bistrița, one *târg* in Piatra lui Crăciun, another one in Bacău; on the river Bahlui, one *târg* in Hârlău, then in Iași etc.<sup>134</sup> The double name borne by Baia (also named Moldova) or Hârlău (named Bachlovia) shows that the main *târg* in the valley was initially in the town on the upper reaches, not in the one in the valley. All major river valleys had this kind of settlement, catering for the population on the waterway at the foothills and another for the valley region. The two relied on each other's economy, since they supplied two different areas, but there was probably also mutual political reliance at stake, albeit hard to explain with the sources we now have available. The explanation of the fact that double names coexisted for a while has to do with the time when those settlements became the domain of Moldavian rulers.

For the period that predated mid 14th century, commercial events in these settlements were periodical, and occurred on dates that the locals and the merchants already knew. As interest grew, the settlements tended to develop, and the market held there became permanent. This is how a simple rural settlement becomes a pre-urban

<sup>131</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 187, doc. 134; p. 195, doc. 141; p. 392, doc. 277; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 143–144; N. Grigoraș, *Instituții feudale din Moldova*, I, *Organizarea de stat până la mijlocul sec. al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1971), p. 322.

<sup>132</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 266.

<sup>133</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>134</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 266.

settlement. Unfortunately, even the pre-urban stage was proven in but a few cases, due to the lack of systematic archaeological excavations. Many excavations were triggered by accidental discoveries and in only few cases (Baia, Suceava, Siret, Iași, Trotuș) were conducted in an organized fashion, but did not cover the entire inhabited area. Until now, the results of this research does not confirm an urban stage for these settlements prior to c. 1350. For us to be able to discuss these *târgs* as towns, they had to meet several basic purposes: to be more densely populated than nearby villages, to have an at least minimal specialization of trade and crafts and, last but not least, to have several institutions of their own. The basic functions are compounded by political and administrative purposes. Most Moldavian towns also became customs seats and county centres, hosting a palace or the house of a ruler, or the residence of some local officials for him. It was barely when the *târgs* met the above-mentioned conditions that we may say they reached the urban stage.

Political circumstance assigned to the urbanization of Moldavia features that are different from those in Wallachia. There, towns began developing just like the country did, from the mountains towards the Danube, evolving out of settlements that initially housed local seats and *târgs*, with colonists being a major element in towns at the foothills. Moldavia displays ever since its inception the climate that set a new course for towns. In the lands further down south and towards the sea, which came under a lengthy Mongol rule, four towns already existed: Cetatea Albă, Kilia, Orheiul Vechi and Costești. The first two kept their specific organization even after becoming part of Moldavia. The others were destroyed when conquered and only Orhei had a later urban development. The situation was different in the northern and central areas. Here sources mention the development of other types of settlements, evolving out of local *târgs*, where substantial groups of colonists settled.

The future administrative make-up of Moldavia shows that the country was divided into the Lower and the Upper Countries. From the 16th century on, each was ruled by a grand *vornic*, the one in the Upper Country residing in Dorohoi, and the one in the southern lands, in Bârlad.<sup>135</sup> The first sources on these two “countries” date after Alexandru the Good’s reign. Two of his followers, Ilie I and Ștefan II

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<sup>135</sup> *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 28, 173, 176, 183, 186; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 70; Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 238; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, II, p. 240.



reigned together for a while (1435/1436–1442).<sup>136</sup> As part of a compromise, the former had authority over the north-west, while the other over the south-east, in a well-traced territory: the counties of Vaslui, Tutova, Tecuci, Covurlui.<sup>137</sup> Each ruler had his own capital (Ilie in Suceava, Ștefan in Vaslui), his own council and chancellery.<sup>138</sup> To confirm this, a 1562 source mentions the existence of a Lower Country crown, which was still in the country's treasury, along with the grand crown of the country.<sup>139</sup> This has led some historians to believe that before Moldavia became a fully fledged state, two major political structures existed. The north-west part had supposedly covered the areas that Bogdan I ruled over, whereas the south-east part was only later added as a conquest. Emil Țirtosu believes the country to have been divided between a ruler by right and a co-ruler, taking however into account the existence of special status for the southern land, a status stemming from a period before Moldavia emerged<sup>140</sup> Victor Spinei claims that, the Subcarpathians notwithstanding, the Lower Country had actually spread over the land the Moldavian rulers claimed from the Mongols, and local features are owed to the long-time control of the Golden Horde.<sup>141</sup> His theory enjoys support, since it has archaeology on its side. Only in the land east of the Siret and south of a line uniting the lower basins of the Bahlui and the Răut rivers were there any settlements with a type of ceramic specific to the lands of the Golden Horde.<sup>142</sup> The low dwelling rate in this part of Moldavia also supports this theory.<sup>143</sup> By corroborating sources of the time, Ștefan Gorovei believes that the integration of the southern land in Moldavia was completed under Petru I, while Șerban Papacostea claims this

<sup>136</sup> Leon Șimanschi, "Criza politică din Moldova dintre anii 1432 și 1437," *AIIAI*, vol. XXXIII (1996), pp. 23–34; Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 486–491.

<sup>137</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192. Ștefan ruled Cetatea Albă as well (I. Bogdan, "Inscripțiile de la Cetatea-Albă și stăpânirea Moldovei asupra ei," *AARMSI*, 2nd series, vol. 30 (1907–1908), pp. 313–325; Țurche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 75–76).

<sup>138</sup> Țirtosu, *Titulatura*, pp. 266–280.

<sup>139</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 109, note 18.

<sup>140</sup> Țirtosu, *Titulatura*, pp. 166–171.

<sup>141</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 385.

<sup>142</sup> Reddish-yellow ceramics (Victor Spinei, "Începuturile vieții urbane la Bârlad și problema berladnicilor," *AIIAI*, vol. XVI (1979), p. 286.

<sup>143</sup> N. Zaharia, M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Em. Zaharia, *Așezări din Moldova de la paleolitic până în secolul al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1970), pp. 141–143.

process ended during Roman I's reign, who did not accidentally add the phrase "[ruler] from mountain to sea" to his title.<sup>144</sup>

The Milcovia bishopric in southern Moldavia, as well as the division of the country in 1435 lead us to believe that the Lower Country was a distinct area that requires a distinct approach. It covered:

1. the bishopric of Milcovia—the future county of Putna—between the Carpathians, the Trotuș valley and Siret or Prut;
2. parts of Ștefan II's estate at 1435, with the future counties of Vaslui, Tutova, Tecuci, Covurlui, Fălciu, Basarabia included (except Kilia).

The last territory vastly overlaps the last region that was added to Moldavia prior to 1392, under Petru I or Roman I. The suggested probability that a separate ruler held this land between the time when Mongols were chased away and when it was integrated into Moldavia is small and not confirmed by sources.<sup>145</sup> Several papal documents in 1370–1371 indicate that Moldavia was divided into at least two parts. In 1370, Pope Urban V asked the bishops of Poland to look into Lațcu's wish of converting to Catholicism and whether the town of Siret could become a bishop's see. This text mentions Moldavia and the land ruled over at that time: *ac totam dictam terram seu ducatum Moldaviensem, in quantum ad praefatum duces pertinet*.<sup>146</sup> The pope's wish to create a bishopric here excludes the southern part of Moldavia, which already had the bishopric of Milcovia.<sup>147</sup> In 1371, Pope Gregory XI appoints a new tenured bishop both for Milcovia, whose seat had been vacated, but also for the newly founded Siret bishopric. The first bishop comes from Hungary, the second one from Poland.<sup>148</sup> The two were in different jurisdictions. The southern bishopric had the

<sup>144</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 117, 200–210; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 104–112.

<sup>145</sup> Papacostea believes this ruler may have been Costea voivode, mentioned in *Pomelnicul de la Bistrița* (Damian P. Bogdan, *Pomelnicul Mănăstirei Bistrița* (Bucharest, 1941), p. 50; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 104–112). One plausible version is also that provided by Ștefan S. Gorovei, who sees Costea as probably one of Bogdan's sons, and father of future rulers Petru I and Roman I (Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 111–123).

<sup>146</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 160, doc. 124.

<sup>147</sup> The phrasing of the document shows that the Siret bishopric covered Lațcu's "duchy" (Sýkora, "Poziția internațională," p. 1148).

<sup>148</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 174, doc. 133; p. 176, doc. 136.

Franciscans from Hungary, and the northern one the Franciscans from Poland, so they acted under a different status.<sup>149</sup> In 1371, Lațcu only had the northern half of future Moldavia under his authority.

The land where the Milcovia bishopric temporarily came under the command of Wallachia. Some minor details on Franciscan missions notwithstanding, we don't know how this area was organized up to 1400. Some boundary shifts between Moldavia and Wallachia occurred around that time, owing to the support provided by Mircea the Old to Alexandru the Good in claiming the throne. The Moldavian ruler transferred, or, more certainly, acknowledged Mircea's rule over the region south of the town of Bârlad and the river Trotuș.<sup>150</sup> The changes are captured in a document passed by Stibor, voivode of Transylvania, who asks the Szekler *comes* and the customs officials in Brașov not to collect taxes from Moldavian merchants, adding a seemingly insignificant detail: "from Moldavia, from the upper lands" (*de partibus superioribus*).<sup>151</sup> Stibor considered the exemptions that Moldavian tradesmen enjoyed, but these privileges were not granted for certain parts of the country, but for a specific community or for all the merchants in the country. The author of this document would not have made this geographic and political note had he not been aware of a land division distinct from that of Moldavia. The "lower lands" were not in Alexandru's grasp at that time. Between the end of Mircea the Old's reign (1417–1418) and 1423,<sup>152</sup> Alexandru took over most of his southern neighbour's land and merged it with Moldavia.<sup>153</sup> In the Lutsk congress of 1429, the ruler of Wallachia, Dan II, complained over lands that the Moldavian prince had unrightfully taken. To support their case, the Wallachian envoys brought a boundary map, which has not been preserved to this day.<sup>154</sup> Future writings serve as reminders of this situation. The chronicle of Bielski the Pole is one of them. When documenting the division enacted by Ilie and Ștefan, it states that the latter had been granted "The Lower Country, the

<sup>149</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, pp. 216–217, doc. 164–165; Achim, "Ordinul franciscan," pp. 405–408.

<sup>150</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>151</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 196, doc. 119.

<sup>152</sup> The first document to mention the river of Putna, south, as part of Moldavia is dated March 1423 (DRH, A, I, p. 77, doc. 53).

<sup>153</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 112–119.

<sup>154</sup> Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," pp. XXVIII, XXXII.

Muntenian one.”<sup>155</sup> Ureche’s chronicle explains the boundary quarrels between the two neighbours along its course: “And heretofore were both countries in great discord, as Wallachia sought to have its border set unto the waters of the Trotuș.”<sup>156</sup> When enumerating Moldavia’s boundaries with Wallachia, Dimitrie Cantemir states that they were “once, the rivers of Siret and Trotuș.”<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, several 16th century maps refer to *Valahia* as the southern part of Moldavia, with only the northern part being termed *Moldavia*.<sup>158</sup> It is our belief that these memories would have been lost to time had they not relied on previous facts. We must note one final feature: the Moldavian ruler built no residence south of the river Trotuș, nor did he issue any documents in this area.

The Moldavian Lower Country followed a course in its evolution distinct from Oltenia, in Wallachia. In Oltenia, the local knezats, after subjecting to the rule of the prince in Argeș, were united and had their autonomy extended, a status which lasted over two more centuries. The limited authority of the Wallachian ruler, as well as the vast power wielded by the great *ban* and the local boyars impacted the future urbanization of the area. The Lower country displays a different climate, on account of the distinct political development of the area, owing to Mongol domination. The several decades during which the Lower Country freed itself of their influence (after 1367–1368) and the time when Wallachia held sway over it allowed local features to flourish, but in a distinct fashion from Oltenia. The only common element in the two areas is that both underwent urbanization only later on, but for different causes. In Oltenia, towns developed only from the 16th century on, when the central authority gained power and limited the influence of grand boyars over local *târgs*, seizing their domains. In the Lower Country, towns emerge earlier on, at the turn of the 15th century with direct support by the ruler, who brought in settlers and endowed them with privileges. The town density remained low only east of the Prut, where the Mongol threat lingered.

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<sup>155</sup> G. I. Nastase, “Istoria moldovenească din “Kronika Polska” a lui Bielski,” *Cercetări istorice* (Iași) vol. I (1925), p. 118.

<sup>156</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 93.

<sup>157</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, p. 142.

<sup>158</sup> Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei,” pp. XXV–XXVI.

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One part of the future Moldavian towns are mentioned in some Russian sources: *The Novgorod First Chronicle*, and the *Voskresenskaia* and *Ermolinskaia* chronicles. Of the three, *The Novgorod First Chronicle*, with its *Synodal* version, the oldest one, probably written in 1387–1396 in Kiev, includes a list of 358 strongholds and towns in Russia and its surroundings.<sup>159</sup> For “Romanian” countries, this source mentions the following settlements:

Cetatea Albă—at the Dniester mouth, Cerna (or Czarnigrad), Târgul Iașilor—on the Prut, Târgul lui Roman—on the Moldova, Neamț, in the mountains—Piatra lui Crăciun, Suceava, Siret, Baia, Țețina, Kolomyia, Cetățuia—on the Ceremuș, Hotinul—on the Dniester.<sup>160</sup>

If we were to analyze their geographic distribution, we would find that the data the author relied on were accurate. South to north, despite small errors (passable, when we consider the knowledge of the time), settlements are noted exactly as present on the map. Almost all Romanian historians believe the list referred only to towns, and not to strongholds.<sup>161</sup> Some researchers, such as Giurescu, have even gone so far as to claim that the listed towns were active even before the state was founded.<sup>162</sup> The one drafting the Russian list only terms them by *grad*, a Slavonic indication used chiefly for strongholds, and only secondly for towns. The inclusion of Țețina and the Cetățuia on the Ceremuș show the author’s main interest to the strongholds, and not the towns of the area. Piatra lui Crăciun is noted, also a simple stronghold. 1395 sees King Sigismund of Hungary cross the area, who believes the settlement to be a *villa*, probably because it did not have

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<sup>159</sup> One of the best English editions was published in 1914: *The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016–1471*, Camden Third Series, vol. XXV, trans. Robert Michell, Nevill Forbes (London, 1914). The list of interest was not published in this edition.

<sup>160</sup> The list also features Kilia, which was not Moldavian territory at that point. The text was published in *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi staršego i mladšego izvodov*, eds. A. N. Nasonov, M. N. Tihomirov (Moscow, 1950), p. 475. M. N. Tihomirov believes it was created between 1387 and 1392 (M. N. Tihomirov, “Spisok russkikh gorodov dalnih i bližnih,” *Istoriceskie zapiski* (Moscow) vol. 40 (1952), pp. 214–259); Alexandru Andronic places it between 1388 and 1391 (Andronic, “Orașe moldovenești,” pp. 205–215. More recent research claims the list was written later on, between 1394–1396 (Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 56, 67, note 214).

<sup>161</sup> Except Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 467–468.

<sup>162</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 71–72.

the features of a town to a foreign eye.<sup>163</sup> We cannot however deny that a part of these settlements had reached at least pre-urban status. The presence of the word *târg* comes to support this. The list makes no mention to any settlement in the southern areas of Moldavia: Bârlad Vaslui, Tecuci, Bacău or Trotuș, nor does it mention any stronghold or town in Wallachia. One possible explanation would be the dependence of the territory south of the Trotuș on Wallachia, as well as of the fact that in Bacău or Trotuș, but also in Vaslui there were no fortifications or princely residences worth mentioning. Except for harbours by the Danube and the sea, the only settlement mentioned in the entire land spanning between the Siret and the Dniester is Iași.

The next mention, more complete, of some settlements that became towns dates back to 1408, when Alexandru the Good mentions the country customs duties in a privilege for Polish merchants. They had been instated by the ruler in: Hotin, Cernăuți, Siret, Dorohoi, Iași, Tighina, Cetatea Albă, Roman, Neamț, Bacău, Bârlad, Trotuș, Baia, Moldovița. The main customs house of the country was in the seat of the ruler, Suceava.<sup>164</sup> Economic reasons prompted the prince to collect customs in major settlements of the country (except Moldovița), located at crossroads, in fords, in places with a commercial potential. If we were to add archaeological data, a good part of the settlements in question were in the final stages in the transition to the urban status. The 1460 privilege would add customs in towns emerged or added to the country in the former half of the 15th century: Tecuci, Adjud, Putna, Vaslui and Lăpușna.<sup>165</sup> For various reasons, no customs houses existed in the towns of Piatra lui Crăciun, Hârlău, Cotnari or Huși.

A Moldavian timeline would place the first towns in the southern areas. The most substantial data refers to towns by the Black Sea. When they emerged, they were not part of Moldavia, and were only conquered at the end of the 14th century and in the next one. Only the harbours at Kilia and Cetatea Albă feature in the Russian list, the last one being also the oldest. Placed strategically, where the Dniester flowed into the Black Sea, a medieval settlement dependent on the Byzantine Empire grew where the a Greek colony stood (*Tyras*). From the 10th–11th centuries on, the settlement is ever more frequently

<sup>163</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 130, doc. 81.

<sup>164</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>165</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

mentioned in sources, being called *Mavrokastron* (“Cetatea Neagră”—“The Black Stronghold”), but also *Asprokastron*, then *Belgorod* or *Akkerman* (“Cetatea Albă”—“The White Stronghold”).<sup>166</sup> It was long believed that the two names indicated Cetatea Albă, but it has recently been proven that there were two strongholds, on both banks of the Dniester.<sup>167</sup> The 1241 Mongol conquest of the area at the mouths of the Dniester increased the significance of settlements here, which took advantage of the new trade venue provided by new rulers. Mongols allowed the Genovese to set up in their lands in Crimea (at Caffa and Sugdaia), then in Cetatea Albă and the “Black” one. In the latter, the Genovese are first mentioned in 1290.<sup>168</sup> Cetatea Albă develops from mid 14th century on. The modification of the main path in the “Mongol route,” which already crossed Moldavia in c. 1380, contributed to the town’s emergence. After a final Mongol episode,<sup>169</sup> Cetatea Albă enters the dominion of Moldavian princes (c. 1377–1378).<sup>170</sup> Instead, Cetatea Neagră begins to decay and no longer plays an important role in the economy of the area. Even though it became Moldavian land, Cetatea Albă did keep its internal autonomy, the Genovese continuing to play a major part.<sup>171</sup> The prince was mainly interested in owning the fortress, but also the customs point, which brought significant income.<sup>172</sup>

On the mouth of the Danube, Kilia (*Chelia* in sources) was at an even greater advantage, thanks to Genovese merchants. A settlement with probable Byzantine origins existed here at least since the 13th century, and was mentioned in the 1241 invasion. Along with the residence of Bulgarian emperors in Târnovo, the Mongols supposedly

<sup>166</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>167</sup> M. Cazacu, “A propos de l’expansion polono-lituanienne au nord de la Mer Noire aux XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. Czarnigrad, la “Cité Noire” de l’embouchure du Dniestr,” in *Passé turco-tatar, présent soviétique. Études offertes à Alexandre Benningsen*, eds. Ch. Lemerrier-Quelquejay, G. Veinstein, S. E. Wimbush (Louvain-Paris, 1986), pp. 100–104; Șerban Papacostea, “Maurocastrum și Cetatea Albă: identitatea unei așezări medievale,” *RI*, vol. VI, no. 11–12 (1995), pp. 911–915.

<sup>168</sup> Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, p. 102; p. 176, doc. XL; Ciociltan, *Mongolii*, pp. 22–31, 129–144.

<sup>169</sup> Gh. I. Brătianu, “Demetrius Princeps Tartatorum (Ca. 1360–1380),” *Revue des études roumaines* (Paris) vol. IX–X (1965), pp. 42–46.

<sup>170</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 200–210; see also Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 118; Spinci, *Moldova*, pp. 382–385.

<sup>171</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, pp. 42–45; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 57; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 50.

<sup>172</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

conquered another major town, called *Kīla*.<sup>173</sup> Along with Kaliakra, Silistra, Kavarna and Licostomo, Kilia is mentioned in a list of castles of the Constantinople patriarchy (c. 1318–1323).<sup>174</sup> Recent research claims that two settlements existed by the Danube, at Kilia: a Byzantine stronghold, called Licostomo, on an island where the Kilia branch flowed into the sea, and another, Kilia, further within, on the waterway. The precise location of the two is still debated.<sup>175</sup> Kilia owes its ascent to the decline of its rival town, Vicina, whose commerce was dealt a heavy blow after the Genovese-Byzantine war of 1351–1352. Afterwards, the Byzantines lost their foothold on the Lower Danube, and Kilia entered Genovese control.<sup>176</sup> Notary Antonio di Ponzò's 1360–1361 records show the town to have had a very active trade, with a wealthy and highly mobile Genovese colony.<sup>177</sup> In one single century, Kilia went through various reigns: Wallachia, Moldavia, and Hungary.<sup>178</sup> From 1465 until 1484, the town, and the stronghold itself, rebuilt on the other bank of the Danube by Ștefan the Great (1479) belonged to Moldavia.<sup>179</sup> As was the case Cetatea Albă, it is assumed that the townspeople of Kilia enjoyed autonomy.

Essentially, harbours by the sea emerged on Byzantine foundations, with Genovese contributions and in a climate ensured by Mongol domination. The impact that these towns had on other Moldavian urban centres was mostly economic, and it affected trade before anything else. The rulers had political and military interests here, namely special strategic positions and bringing supplementary income in the treasury. The two towns were not long under Moldavian rule. Moldavian rulers held Cetatea Albă for around one hundred years, while Kilia was in this situation for only three decades. Their structure, although little

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<sup>173</sup> Aurel Decei, "L'invasion des tatars de 1241/1242 dans nos régions selon la Djami ot-Tevarikh de Fâzil ol-Lah Râsid od-Din," *RRH*, vol. XII, no. 1 (1973), pp. 120–121.

<sup>174</sup> *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, vol. I, *Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani*, eds. Fr. Miklosich, Jos. Müller (Vienna, 1860), p. 95, doc. LII-II.

<sup>175</sup> Octavian Iliescu, "Localizarea vechiului Licostomo," *SRDI*, vol. XXV, no. 3 (1972), pp. 452–453.

<sup>176</sup> Papacostea, "De Vicina à Kilia," pp. 69–78.

<sup>177</sup> Published by Pistarino in *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare*; comments: Octavian Iliescu, "Note sur l'apport roumain au ravitaillement de Byzance d'après une source inédite du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Nouvelles études d'Histoire*, vol. 3 (1965), pp. 105–116.

<sup>178</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 221; Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 361–362; Panaitescu, "Legăturile moldo-polone," pp. 98–102; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 39–42, 46–48.

<sup>179</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 34.



known, is not reflected by other towns in the country. The counsel office in Kilia was not adopted in other towns. The *şoltuzes* and the *voites* that we initially find in documents as presiding over the communities in Siret, Baia or Suceava are recorded in newer towns like Bârlad or Tecuci, but not in Cetatea Albă or Kilia. No other town in Moldavia save for Cetatea Albă issued its own coins. The hasty acceptance of Ottoman rule in Kilia and Cetatea Albă in 1484 is a telling reminder of how close to Moldavia these towns were. Most inhabitants here preferred the Ottoman system, which granted freedom to trade in a much wider territory and very appealing customs practices. For the townspeople, internal autonomy and economic interests came first.<sup>180</sup>

The area between the Prut and the Dniester also saw another type of town, the one emerging under Mongol domination. Archaeological research revealed two settlements of this kind: Orheiul Vechi and Costeşti. Since they lacked an urban tradition of their own, the Mongols used the conquered populations to build towns. Along with their subjects, they also colonised craftsmen and tradesmen often relocated by force from Russia or Asia. The emergence of new towns was favoured by incentives for trade and certain crafts near centres of Mongol power.<sup>181</sup> This was how the town of Orheiul Vechi developed on the Răut river bank, which endured for at least one decade, as scholars believe. The Mongol ruler that resided here minted his own coins, dated at the end of Mongol domination, after 1350. The coins have an Arabic legend and indicate that they were minted in *Şehr al-Djedid* or *Ianghi-Şehr*, hence in New Town, the name that Mongols assigned Orhei. The excavations here revealed that Mongols erected an earthen fortalice, where the local ruler probably resided.<sup>182</sup> A similar situation in Costeşti, where silver coins were possibly minted (the legend remains undeciphered and the Mongol name of the settlement is unknown). The town was thriving and had, like Orheiul Vechi, many stone buildings, with a water network made of ceramic piping.<sup>183</sup> Mongol control over these settlements succumbed around 1367–1368,

<sup>180</sup> Nicoară Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités marchandes de Kilia et de Cetatea Albă par Bayezid II,” *SF*, vol. XXIII (1964), pp. 68–72.

<sup>181</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 338–339; Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 267.

<sup>182</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 325–327.

<sup>183</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 260–261, 268.

when minting and the circulation of other currency issued by khans ceased.<sup>184</sup>

The Mongol urban centres had no particular influence on the development of future Moldavian towns. Orheiul Vechi and Costești were laid to waste when conquered. It was only in Orhei that the ancient settlement remained inhabited, and the fortalice, where the ruler's representative set up camp, was rebuilt. The Mongol name is discarded and replaced by Orhei, probably after mid 14th century. The new name is Hungarian and suggests colonisation by Transcarpathian inhabitants. Mongol attacks had the town finally relocate 18 kilometres away in the 16th century.<sup>185</sup>

Other south Moldavian towns, Bârlad, Vaslui or Huși were only late to emerge, at the end of the 14th century and the early 15th. The residence of a *vornic* for the Lower Country in Bârlad invited the assumption that there were a centre of power and a local *târg*. One of the first records of this settlement dates to 1408, when it features as a customs point on the road merchants took when carrying fish to Brăila.<sup>186</sup> Several years later, Bârlad is mentioned in the 1412 Hungarian-Polish treaty at Lublau, but the one drafting the text was not sure whether it was a town or a village: *forum seu villa Berlam*.<sup>187</sup> Its mention in the treaty leads us to believe this was a major settlement. Its development was driven on by Alexandru the Good, who granted inhabitants certain tax exemptions.<sup>188</sup> It was through tax exemptions that the same prince supported the building of Vaslui.<sup>189</sup> The use of the Slavonic *miasto* in the above-mentioned 1435 document to designate Vaslui reveals the existence of a privileged group here (probably settlers).<sup>190</sup> In early 15th century, the town of Huși also develops; here, it seems Alexandru the Good set up a group of Hussites.<sup>191</sup> The attention that Alexandru devoted to this area is due exactly to its poor urbanization rate.

<sup>184</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 380; details in Victor Spinei, "Comerțul și geneza orașelor din sud-estul Moldovei (secolele XIII–XIV)," *Analele Brăilei*, new series, vol. I, no. 1 (1993), pp. 185–215.

<sup>185</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 36, doc. 45.

<sup>186</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>187</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 483, doc. CCCC1.

<sup>188</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151.

<sup>189</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96.

<sup>190</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192; *Călători străini*, III, p. 639.

<sup>191</sup> Mihail P. Dan, *Cehi, slovaci și români în veacurile XIII–XVI* (Sibiu, 1944), pp. 84–88; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 249–250.

The last urban centres mentioned in this area are Tecuci and Galați, which were initially Wallachian and were occupied by Moldavia under Alexandru the Good's reign. Tecuci is called a *miasto* in 1435, indicating that a privileged group of colonists had (probably recently) settled here.<sup>192</sup> Proof to the fact that southern Moldavia had a different status than the central and northern areas was the town of Galați. It had an excellent geographic position, between the points where the rivers of Siret and Prut joined the Danube, but a small distance away from Brăila (around 20 kms), the main harbour for Wallachia. Its small distance from Brăila hindered substantially the development of Galați, since two harbour towns could survive so close to each other only with great difficulty. Competition from the Kilia harbour added to this. In the 15th century, Galați acted only as a centre for fishing operations and a loading dock. Kilia was conquered in 1484 by the Ottomans, eliminating the final obstacle for the town by the mouth of the Siret.

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Exactly how ancient are towns in central and northern Moldavia? In sources, local settlements with economic and political purposes do not feature before mid 14th century, after King Louis I extended his dominion east of the Carpathians. Colonization played a major part in urbanizing the area. As everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe, the process of colonization was complex and had effects on the future development of lands where it occurred. Colonists from Transylvania (Hungarian for the most part, but German as well) or from Poland (German) came to Moldavia mainly for economic reasons.<sup>193</sup> Local centres were appealing, had promising potential for development and allowed colonists to profit from their crafts or trade. While in control of this territory, the king of Hungary sought to reinforce his authority and provide incentive for the passage of Hungarians, Saxons, and Romanians in lands west of the mountains. Romanian historiography has mostly emphasized political and religious reasons that determined the Romanians to leave, while the Saxons and the Hungarians supposedly left because their legal and religious autonomy was threatened

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<sup>192</sup> See the discussion on the term *miasto* below.

<sup>193</sup> Weczerka, "Die Stellung," p. 235.

or because they were discontent with the kings' tax policy.<sup>194</sup> This is partly true. Hungarian kings had their agenda continued by the first Moldavian rulers. The arrival of new colonists increased income, but also the growth rate of the country as a whole (a true *melioratio terrae*).

The first Catholic groups entered Moldavia after the bishopric of Cumania was founded, as Pope Gregory's IX 1234 letter indicates: "some, both Hungarian, and Teutonic, together with other believers of righteous faith in the kingdom of Hungary, cross towards them [beyond the mountains] to dwell there."<sup>195</sup> Giurescu claimed that this bishopric, except for the main residence in the stronghold of Milcovia, did have several "noteworthy centres," around the town of Trotuş or in Adjud.<sup>196</sup> This is only an assumption that this historian ventures, but he does not have any arguments for it. Had these centres existed, the Mongol invasion destroyed them, as it did with Milcovia. This information is relayed by a papal document in 1278, which also claims that those of Catholic faith left the area after 1241 (its claims are a bit too far-fetched).<sup>197</sup> Other settlers crossed the mountains after the bishopric was reactivated in 1347, when the Mongol threat was eliminated by Hungarian armies.<sup>198</sup> In 1359, as Petru and Ştefan waged war on each other, the so-called *provinciales Hungarorum* are mentioned.<sup>199</sup> Victor Spinei believed them to be "officials from eastern states of the Anjou state," while Şerban Papacostea said they were probably from Maramureş.<sup>200</sup> Since one of the main meanings of the Latin *provinciales* was that of "inhabitant of a province / dependent on a jurisdiction,"<sup>201</sup> Jan Długosz's chronicle probably records Hungarians settled in Moldavia. If one of the above-mentioned ones were from Transylvania or Maramureş, areas known at that time, the source would have noted their origin.

Catholics were accompanied by missionaries, since the pope and the Hungarian authorities also sought to convert the locals to Catholicism.

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<sup>194</sup> Pascu also emphasizes political and religious reasons, *Voievodatul*, vol. I, p. 250 and Ştefan Meleş, *Emigrări româneşti din Transilvania în secolele XIII–XX*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1977), pp. 71–79.

<sup>195</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 20, doc. 9.

<sup>196</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 44.

<sup>197</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 29, doc. 12.

<sup>198</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 63, doc. 34.

<sup>199</sup> Długosi, *Annales seu cronicae*, vol. IX, pp. 299–301.

<sup>200</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 358; Papacostea, "Triumful luptei," p. 55.

<sup>201</sup> Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis*, pp. 867–868.

Ever since 1310, Hotin had a Catholic bishop in temporary residence, an information which only adds to the questions concerning this town's status in early 14th century.<sup>202</sup> In 1345, Siret (*locum Cerethi*), together with Baia (*locum Moldaviae*), Cetatea Albă (*locum Albi Castris*), Licostomo (*locum Licosconi*) and other settlements with names that do not lend themselves so easily to identification feature among the custodies of the Franciscan vicariate of Russia (Red Russia).<sup>203</sup> Victor Spinei and others believes that 1345 cannot be accepted as a date, since the Russian vicariate was only later created. Even so, the source must not be completely discarded, since the foundation date for this vicariate had not yet been completely clarified.<sup>204</sup> Missionary activity heightened both in Moldavia, and in the former Galician Rus', especially after the latter entered in 1372 under zealous Władysław of Opole's control, a representative for King Louis I of Hungary, who had taken over the province after King Casimir III died. In Siret, the Dominicans also arrive and build a monastery, where miracles would be worked later on.<sup>205</sup> After the bishopric of Siret was created (1371), *Annales minorum* mention the 1378 martyrdom of two Franciscans in this town, probably during a local riot, indicating that the Romanians opposed the missionary propaganda.<sup>206</sup> The large number of Catholics in the heartland of Moldavia, but also the wish to continue the conversion efforts here had Pope John XXIII accept King Władysław Jagiełło's request of creating a Catholic bishopric in Baia. The first bishop, John of Ryza, was officially appointed in c. 1413–1420.<sup>207</sup> Many Saxons were to settle in Baia, Suceava, Neamț, Hârlău and Iași. John, archbishop of Sultanieh, visited Moldavia prior to 1404 and noted the large numbers of Germans: “and we have many Germans living in these parts.”<sup>208</sup> The Germans stood out as craftsmen in strongholds erected by the rulers and merchants, but also as committed soldiers. In the strongholds at

<sup>202</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. XXV; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 242.

<sup>203</sup> Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova*, pp. 87–88; Renate Möhlenkamp, “Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen moldauischen Städte bis Ende des XVI. Jahrhundert,” in *România în istoria universală*, vol. III, part 1, eds. I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Buzatu, V. Cristian (Iași, 1988), p. 931 and 963, note 112.

<sup>204</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 286; Achim, “Ordinul franciscan,” pp. 405–406.

<sup>205</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1; R. Loenertz, “Le Société de Frères Pérégrinants et les convents dominicains de Ruthénie et de Moldo-Valachie (2),” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* (Roma) vol. IV (1934), p. 33.

<sup>206</sup> Moldavia is now called *Valachiae minor* (*Annales minorum*, vol. IX, p. 20).

<sup>207</sup> C. Auner, “Episcopia de Baia,” *RC* 4 (1915), pp. 94–101.

<sup>208</sup> *Călători străini*, I, p. 39.

Șcheia (near Suceava) and Roman, weaponry and military gear were found along grey ceramics, unspecific to Moldavia.<sup>209</sup>

Later sources mention Catholics in the villages and towns of the counties of Bacău, Roman and Trotuș. Compared to the northern area, Hungarians were in larger numbers than Saxons here.<sup>210</sup> The Catholics in this part of Moldavia had the Bacău bishopric created for them (c. 1391–1392).<sup>211</sup> The ethnicity of inhabitants here, today referred as *ceangăi*—Csangos, is subject to controversy. They are believed to have been either a magyarized Romanian population, which crossed over from Transylvania into Moldavia in the 18th century,<sup>212</sup> or a Hungarian population that arrived during the early days of Moldavia, that was later Romanianized.<sup>213</sup> The only element of certainty about them was their Catholicism. A final wave of Hungarians, the Hussites, enters Moldavia in the 15th century.<sup>214</sup>

Moldavian towns were not only host to Saxons and Hungarians, but also to numerous Armenians. It was initially claimed that Armenians had started coming to Moldavia after the Persians devastated Armenia's

<sup>209</sup> Gh. Diaconu, N. Constantinescu, *Cetatea Șcheia. Monografie arheologică* (Bucharest, 1960), pp. 72–82, 86–89; M. D. Matei, L. Chițescu, “Problèmes historiques concernant la forteresse du temps des Mușat et l'établissement urbain de Roman,” *Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'Histoire ancienne*, new series, vol. X (1966), p. 307.

<sup>210</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 119, doc. 84; *Călători străini*, IV, p. 38; Marco Bandini, *Codex. Vizitarea generală a tuturor bisericilor catolice de rit roman din Provincia Moldova, 1646–1648*, ed. Traian Diaconescu (Iași, 2006), pp. 114–126, 134–144, 196–202; see also Robin Baker, “Magyras, Mongols, Romanians and Saxons: Population Mix and Density in Moldavia, from 1230 to 1365,” *Balkan Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (1996), pp. 63–76.

<sup>211</sup> Radu Rosetti, “Despre unguri și episcopiile catolice din Moldova,” *AARMSI*, 2nd series, vol. 27 (1904–1905), pp. 297–301; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 121–123.

<sup>212</sup> N. Iorga believed that the Csangos were Cuman or Pecheneg in origin (Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, p. 27). Other researchers believed they were Romanians from Szekler County who converted to Catholicism and were magyarized; they crossed into Moldavia in large numbers in the 18th century, as it appears (Dumitru Mărtinaș, *Originea ceangăilor din Moldova*, eds. Ion Coja, V. M. Ungureanu (Bucharest, 1985), pp. 20–27, 41–51).

<sup>213</sup> Some Hungarian specialists see the Csangos as Hungarians settled in Moldavia from the 13th century on. One biased historiography in Ferenc Pozsony, *The Hungarians Csángó of Moldova* (Buffalo, Toronto, 2006), pp. 8–27. On Catholics in Moldavia, also see recent studies: Liviu Pilat, *Comunități tăcute. Satele din parohia Săbăoani (secolele XVII–XVIII)* (Bacău, 2002); Marius Diaconescu, “Petru Zöld și “descoperirea” ceangăilor din Moldova în a doua jumătate a secolului XVIII,” *AIIAI*, vol. XXXIX–XL (2002–2003), pp. 247–292.

<sup>214</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 64–65; Dan, *Cehi*, pp. 84–88, 99–104, 196–206; Șerban Papacostea, “Știri noi cu privire la istoria husitismului în Moldova în timpul lui Alexandru cel Bun,” in *Eval mediu românesc. Realități politice și curente spirituale* (Bucharest, 2001), pp. 279–286.

capital, Ani, in 1064.<sup>215</sup> This has no backing, since Ani continued to be populated by Armenians after this time as well. In a worst-case scenario, some inhabitants moved into the Byzantium and Cilicia, but not in the present-day area of the Romanian Principalities. Ani and other Armenian towns entered their decline after being conquered and pillaged by the Mongols in 1236–1244. A massive earthquake dealt them another blow in 1319. Following the 1357–1403 invasions, Armenia came under the rule of a Turkmen dynasty (Kara Koyunlu), which promoted Islam; the neighbouring Armenian kingdom of Cilicia also ceased to exist in 1375. A large part of the population fled.<sup>216</sup> Nicolae Iorga and Constantin C. Giurescu claim that the first Armenians had come to Moldavia in the former half of the 14th century, after crossing the Black Sea. The shortest path would have been from Trebizonda to Caffa and Cetatea Albă, where Armenian coins issued at the end of the 13th century were found.<sup>217</sup> From here, it is believed the Armenians had left to Kilia, where an Armenian is recorded in 1360 and 1361,<sup>218</sup> and then on to other towns in Moldavia. Giurescu admits that another wave accompanied this one, from Poland.<sup>219</sup> Armenians were to play a significant economic part in eastern Polish towns. When Lviv was granted “the Magdeburg law,” the Armenians already had a large community here, and this was why the Polish kings allowed them to preserve their structures. Other communities dwelled in Lutsk, but also in Kamieniec (Podolski) and Sniatyn, on the boundary with Moldavia, where they certainly crossed further down south.<sup>220</sup> They were granted rights in the Moldavian towns where they settled and built churches: Suceava, Roman, Iași, Botoșani, Hotin, Siret and Vaslui. The Armenian tradition and a series of late inscriptions relay information on each of these churches. In Botoșani, their first church supposedly existed in 1350, in Roman, the Armenians bought a place of worship from the Saxons in 1355, and in Iași, an inscription in the

<sup>215</sup> Siruni, “Armenii,” pp. 109–111.

<sup>216</sup> A. E. Redgate, *The Armenians* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 259–262; Simon Payaslian, *The History of Armenia from the Origins to the Present* (New York, 2007), pp. 70–100.

<sup>217</sup> N. Iorga, “Armenii și românii: o paralelă istorică,” in *Scrieri istorice despre armeni*, ed. Emanuel Actarian (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 199–205; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 212.

<sup>218</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 30, doc. 19; p. 57, doc. 35.

<sup>219</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>220</sup> Nadel-Golobič, “Armenians and Jews,” pp. 360–365.

Armenian church includes the year 1395.<sup>221</sup> Despite the unreliability of these dates, they do tell us that Armenian communities in Moldavia emerged in the latter half of the 14th century. Their ever-growing numbers determined Petru I (1384) and Alexandru the Good (1401) to consent to the bishop of Armenians in Poland extending his authority over Moldavian Armenians as well, with a temporary residence in Suceava.<sup>222</sup> Ruthenians also settled in towns; they came from the former Galician Rus' and Podolia. They seem to be of lesser importance. Ruthenians had a church, a priest and their own street in Suceava. In Iași, late sources mention a street called *Ulița Rusească*.<sup>223</sup>

Moldavian chronicles recorded the arrival of these groups of foreigners, that they tied to the dawn of the country. *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, by Grigore Ureche, credits Saxons and Hungarians with the foundation of the oldest of towns:

Etco the beekeeper, when he heard word of those in Maramureș, he did not tarry in going to the Polish Country, and brought many Russians and settled them on the Suceava river to the north, and on the Siret river to Botoșani"; "Likewise was the *târg* at Baia built by Saxons that were potters, and Suceava was built by Hungarian furriers"; "[Voivode Iuga] founded towns throughout the country, in good places, with villages and domains around them"; [Ștefan the Great] built the *târg* in Iași.<sup>224</sup>

The ideas of Ureche or of those bringing additions to his chronicle are continued by Miron Costin, who, in *Poema polonă*, claims that Dragoș had brought Saxon craftsmen into Moldavia, whereas towns were: "the town, most of them, were founded by Saxons. It was them who also planted the vineyards."<sup>225</sup> Ancient histories, as well as many internal documents use the word *descălecat*, which means "founding"

<sup>221</sup> Grigore M. Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire asupra armenilor din țara vlahilor de diaconul Minas Tokatji* (Bucharest, 1895), pp. 31–44; H. Dj. Siruni, "Bisericile armenie din Țările Române," *Ani. Anuar de cultură armeană* (Bucharest) 1942–1943, pp. 491–493; Grigore Goilav, "Armenii ca întemeietori de orașe în partea de răsărit a Europei," *RLAF*, vol. X (1909), pp. 245, 248; Dan Bădărău, Ioan Caproșu, *Iași vechilor zidiri până la 1821* (Iași, 1974), pp. 45–48.

<sup>222</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 21, doc. 14; P. P. Panaitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru cel Bun pentru episcopia armeană din Suceava (30 iulie 1401)," *RIR*, vol. IV (1934), pp. 46–48.

<sup>223</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100; G. Balș, *Bisericile și mănăstirile moldovenești din veacurile al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1933), p. 535.

<sup>224</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 65, 68, 94.

<sup>225</sup> Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 233; Armbruster, *Dacoromano-Saxonica*, p. 162.



or “organizing.”<sup>226</sup> As with Wallachia, written texts recorded what tradition had only transmitted orally up to then. As Șerban Papacostea argued, it was not the chronicle that created tradition, but the other way around.<sup>227</sup> Despite their lack of knowledge on urbanization, the people at the end of the Middle Ages were aware of the major contribution by foreigners to town development. When claiming this, they relied on the large number of colonists in towns and on the rights they enjoyed. The word *descălecat* used for the foundation of towns shows that the people of that age believed these settlements to have not existed before the country emerged and only surfaced as a result of political action, the decision of the first princes. This perspective places the term *descălecat* on the same interpretive venue as *locatio*, that we will discuss later on.

The significance and role of settlers in the early days of Moldavian towns were understood in a different, even fallacious manner by many Romanian historians. They believe that a Romanian majority created the towns, whereas colonists only arrived later, in small numbers.<sup>228</sup> The main evidence to this is provided by the journals of various travellers that crossed Moldavia and informed us on Catholic communities. Their writings are of substantial value, but they only paint a late picture of the state of things, almost 200 years after groups of settlers began pouring into Moldavia. Of all the ancient Saxon, Hungarian, and Armenian communities, only several traces had remained. A specific event drastically changed the ethnic make-up of towns in the area: the religious Reform.

Ever since the latter half of the 16th century, the Catholic Church dispatched missionaries to look into the state of Catholic communities in Moldavia. They complained that the few Saxons and Hungarians still dwelling there had turned Protestant. This conversion had occurred due to strong ties between the townspeople here and those in Transylvania, which had earlier on turned to Luther and Calvin.<sup>229</sup> The first ones to formalize the divorce from the Church of Rome were the Brașov Saxons, who, in 1541–1542, decided to

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<sup>226</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 54–56; Stela Cheptea, Mircea D. Matei, “On the Relation Between the Political Factor and the Cities in the Middle Ages,” *HU*, vol. XIV, no. 2 (2006), p. 230.

<sup>227</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 15.

<sup>228</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 82–85.

<sup>229</sup> Șerban Papacostea, “Moldova în epoca Reformei. Contribuție la istoria societății moldovenești în veacul al XVI-lea,” *SRDI*, vol. XI, no. 4 (1958), pp. 61–63.

convert to Lutheranism. They were followed by the Saxons in the rest of Transylvania, their clergy choosing a bishop in 1553. Lutheranism was initially successful with the Hungarians as well (1554), who were ultimately won over by Gaspar Heltai's Calvinism (the Diet in Turda, 1564). From Transylvania, the Reform crossed the mountains. Around 1540, the Catholics in Moldavia had largely turned Protestant. For reasons related to external affairs, Petru Rareș (1527–1538, 1541–1546) took a liberal stance in the matter of religion, and let Protestant ideas be circulated among his Catholic subjects. His followers, Ștefan Rareș (1551–1552), Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1552–1561 and 1564–1568), and Ștefan Tomșa (1563–1564), persecuted with great prejudice the “heretics”, as Protestants were seen. One anonymous author mentions Ștefan Rareș's attempt at forceful conversion of the Hungarians to Orthodoxy, while Alexandru Lăpușneanu is believed to have had a similar initiative which targeted all those of Protestant faith.<sup>230</sup> Instead, Despot (1561–1563) decided to appoint a bishop for Moldavian Protestants, who was charged with “restoring the damaged churches.”<sup>231</sup> Aggravated persecutions, the struggles for power among various challengers to the throne, the uncertainty of life as a whole led to the departure of Germans and Hungarians from Moldavia into Transylvania or Poland.<sup>232</sup> The Armenians were also affected. In 1551, they are forced to convert to Orthodoxy and many of their churches in towns are brought down.<sup>233</sup> The Armenian chronicle in Kamieniec even mentions the killing of the Armenian *voit* in Suceava.<sup>234</sup> One 1597 document records these events, also explaining why Armenians left Moldavia: “[Armenian] Dragan Danovac, a townsman of Suceava, seeing that these were times of war, turmoil, and bloodshed in Moldavia, took all his wealth and goods and withdrew forth from Moldavia into Poland.”<sup>235</sup> Finding themselves in a crossfire, these communities decrease in importance and gradually merge into the dominant

<sup>230</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 99, 131–132, 140–141, 266–267; vol. V, pp. 25, 81.

<sup>231</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 140–141; vol. V, p. 25.

<sup>232</sup> Papacostea, “Moldova în epoca,” pp. 69–76; Maria Crăciun, *Protestantism și ortodoxie în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea* (Cluj-Napoca, 1996), pp. 38–40.

<sup>233</sup> Buiuciu, *Cânt de jălire*, pp. 31–44; *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 90, 105; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 157.

<sup>234</sup> H. Dj. Siruni, “Mărturia armenescă despre România extrase din Cronica armenilor din Camenița,” *AARMSI*, 3rd series, vol. 17 (1935–1936), pp. 271–277.

<sup>235</sup> *Suceava. File de istorie. Documente privitoare la istoria orașului, 1388–1918*, vol. I, eds. Vasile Gh. Miron et al. (Bucharest, 1989), p. 208, doc. 81.

culture. Their place in towns is taken over by Romanians, but also by new groups of settlers, coming from south of the Danube. Therefore, we cannot compare the status and the number of colonists' communities prior to 1400 and in the 15th century with those after 1550 and in the 17th century.

Romanian historiographers have yet to agree on whether the newcomers from Moldavia followed "German law" in their organization. Few have supported this theory (among them, the great Iorga),<sup>236</sup> but many others disclaimed or ignored this aspect, stating that we have no evidence and that the settlers' presence was as insignificant as it was the result of chance. One of the arguments of those challenging the theory is the fact that provisions of municipal laws in force in towns have not been kept.<sup>237</sup> The adoption of the "German law" did not entail only an adoption of legal provisions. This was only a component in the complex process of *locatio civitatis*, which indicated the foundation of towns on new grounds (especially those where colonists settled).<sup>238</sup> While we can only assume that *locatio* was applied at least in Câmpulung in Wallachia, we believe that we have reason to claim that this process involved several other Moldavian towns as well, with their local specifics. Sources limit our arguments to topography and legal structure, since these were two of the main components in the *locatio civitatis*.

Baia is one of the few medieval Moldavian towns where ample archaeological research was undertaken, which was not only aimed at churches of times past, but also ancient dwellings and their inventory. Unfortunately, their scope fell short of the entire surface of the old town. An analysis of the discovered dwellings led researchers to claim that we might argue for a systematic topographic outline of inhabited space. The parcellation of land is rigorous and resembles the Transylvanian one. Archaeologists had a hard time pinpointing a date when this parcellation occurred (before or after the German colonists moved in).<sup>239</sup> What we know for a fact is that settlers took up residence here

<sup>236</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, p. 115; Iorga, *Negoțul și meșteșugurile*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>237</sup> Panăitescu, *Comunele*, pp. 137–138; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 169–170. Neutral standpoints in D. Ciurea, "Noi considerații privind orașele și târgurile din Moldova în secolele XIV–XIX," *AIIAI*, vol. VII (1970), p. 25; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, p. 319.

<sup>238</sup> Zientara, "Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation," pp. 62–66; Knoll, "The Urban Development," pp. 71–73, 78–80.

<sup>239</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 2, pp. 40–42, 46–47.

after an older pre-urban settlement was set on fire, after this territory came into the hands of the troops dispatched by the Hungarian king in mid 14th century.<sup>240</sup> It was in Poland and Hungary as well that settlers had a new land to set themselves up, while the *locator*, the one bringing them here, was charged with measuring and distributing the land.<sup>241</sup> In Baia, it is possible he had received land previously used by the locals and devastated after the conquest. Since the locals were not accustomed to a rigorous parcellation, the newcomers were the ones that reshaped the plots. The fact that they did apply the new layout is suggested by another detail specific to town outlines in the rest of Europe: the existence of a central marketplace. On its sides, dwellings are more frequent than on secondary streets, indicating that the new inhabitants sought to make the most of what little space they had, since the trading venue was most proficient here.<sup>242</sup> Baia is different than other towns in the Romanian-inhabited area, where traditional local markets were open and did not follow any specific outline. Along with the marketplace, there were traces of stone-paved roads and houses with tiled stoves, only specific at that time to princely residences or towns in Central Europe or Transylvania.<sup>243</sup>

Research confirms that settlers began arriving in Baia in mid 14th century, before the Principality of Moldavia finished emerging. The Hungarian king encouraged their settling east of the Carpathians for political reasons, to reinforce control over this area. We can rightfully credit him with granting the first privilege for the community here. Political reasons were compounded by economic issues. Settlers could harness the resources of the place and direct them towards markets in Transylvania. A proof to a shift in economic focus is provided by the ceasing of trade exchanges with southern areas.<sup>244</sup> The newcomers also had special legal rights. The leader of the community could preside over very severe cases and pass capital punishments, a rare

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<sup>240</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 22; vol. 2, p. 16.

<sup>241</sup> Quirin, "The Colonial Town," pp. 509–510.

<sup>242</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 156; vol. 2, p. 42; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 118–119, 153–154.

<sup>243</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 36–37; 128–139; vol. 2, pp. 45–46.

<sup>244</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 101–102; vol. 2, p. 245.

occurrence in Moldavian towns.<sup>245</sup> It was from this period that the town seal was kept, which was marked by the symbol of a decapitated stag, whose head is looking onward and is bearing Christ on a cross between the horns, St Hubert's symbol. The legend is Latin: SIGILLUM CAPITALIS CIVITATIS MOLDAVIE TERR(A)E MOLDAVIENSIS (“The Seal of the capital city Moldavia in the Moldavian Country”).<sup>246</sup>

The town of Roman makes for another interesting case study. *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei* tells us that: “[Roman I] built the *târg* called Roman, as his document testifies, which lies in the monastery at Pobrata.”<sup>247</sup> Miron Costin is just as straightforward in *Poema polonă*: “under his reign [Roman I's] was the town of Roman built, bearing his name.”<sup>248</sup> Some historians accept that a link existed between Roman I and this town, others deny it, but no one could express a coherent statement on how Roman could influence the town's emergence. Under the name of “Roman's *târg*”, the settlement is also noted by the Kiev list.<sup>249</sup> Despite Roman's short reign, between 1391 and 1394, the years 1387 and 1396, when the list of Kiev was drafted, allow us to connect the list and the growth of “Roman's *târg*.”<sup>250</sup> It was assumed that Roman, as Petru I's brother, resided in the stronghold he built here prior to his reign.<sup>251</sup> Ever since 1386, *dominus* Roman issued a document concerning some Polish merchants robbed in Moldavia.<sup>252</sup> The two brothers were probably on good terms, since Roman is mentioned in the document whereby Władysław Jagiełło, King of Poland, asks Petru for a loan totalling 4000 silver roubles (1388). The king vows to return the loan and pledges the town of Halych and its land as a guarantee for “Roman and his children.”<sup>253</sup> Roman is noted before the “children,” since he was already considered a follower to the throne, as he was also ruling as associate. He was preferred as a successor to the

<sup>245</sup> Teodor Bălan, *Documente bucovinene*, vol. II (Cernăuți, 1934), pp. 163–164, doc. 87.

<sup>246</sup> Al. Lapedatu, “Antichitățile de la Baia,” *BCMI*, vol. II (1909), p. 64; Virtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 461–465; Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” p. 36.

<sup>247</sup> Ureche, *Letopiseșul*, p. 66.

<sup>248</sup> Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 235.

<sup>249</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>250</sup> Andronic, “Orașe moldovenești,” pp. 205–210; Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei,” pp. XXXIII–XXXV.

<sup>251</sup> Rezachevici, *Cronologia*, pp. 456–457.

<sup>252</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 284–285; Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Mușatinii* (Bucharest, 1976), p. 31.

<sup>253</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 605, doc. 164.

throne, at the expense of Petru's two sons.<sup>254</sup> There have been attempts to connect the town of Roman with another Roman character, who had supposedly lived before Petru I.<sup>255</sup> This another Roman is not mentioned anywhere. Romanian historical tradition noted one single Roman for this age, the prince from 1391–1394. The adoption of the ruler's name involves foundation or relocation on new grounds. A similar case exists in Poland, that of the town of Kazimierz, founded by King Casimir III in 1335.

The emergence of a town by *plantatio*, bringing settlers and introducing a new legal status did not necessarily require a settlement to be built from scratch, but rather to relocate it based on a different outline and other legal principles. The place of emergence for Roman, close to where Moldova river joined the Siret, favoured not only habitation, but also exchanges, so an older settlement probably existed here as well. As associate to the throne, Roman ruled over the area, where he erected two fortifications one after the other. Based on the ceramic and numismatic material uncovered, Lucian Chițescu claims that foreigners were among the inhabitants of these two fortifications (probably as craftsmen and mercenaries), and their arrival can be dated to Roman I's time. Research into this town is fraught with confusion, since archaeologists believed the town developed within the more recent stronghold, although it existed outside the walls.<sup>256</sup> Older outlines and the location of medieval churches, including the Catholic and the Armenian one, are undeniable evidence to this.<sup>257</sup> A specific feature is that the ceramic in Roman does not appear in other towns, showing the newcomers to be from Poland or Northern Europe.<sup>258</sup>

In many cases where no text documents the principles which underlie a town's creation, we must seek other signs in the outline of that

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<sup>254</sup> Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan*, pp. 154–156; Matei Cazacu, "Lucius Apronianus," pp. 257–272.

<sup>255</sup> Gorovei, "Istoria în palimpsest," p. 172; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>256</sup> Matei, Chițescu, "Problèmes historiques," pp. 295–296.

<sup>257</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 24, doc. 17. A confirmation of the fact that the town developed near the residence/bishopric is conveyed by the location of archaeological findings in the 15th–17th centuries (*Istoria orașului Roman (1392–1992)*, ed. Vasile Ursachi (Roman, 1992), p. 53). See also Melchisedec, *Chronica Romanului și a episcopiei de Roman*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1874), pp. 18–19; Eugenia Greceanu, "La structure urbaine médiévale de la ville de Roman," *RRH*, vol. XV, no. 1 (1976), pp. 39–43.

<sup>258</sup> Lucian Chițescu, "Ceramica ștampilată de la Roman și unele probleme în legătură cu purtătorii ei în Moldova," *SCIV*, vol. XV, no. 3 (1964), pp. 411–412, 418–421.

settlement. Eugenia Greceanu, Emil Ioan Emandi and Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu have shown that, to a certain extent, town outlines in Moldavia and Wallachia follow principles encountered in settlements created by German colonists throughout Europe.<sup>259</sup> Their theories were disregarded. The town outline for Roman has no less than four parallel streets stemming from the main marketplace which separated the settlement and the stronghold.<sup>260</sup> The road entering town from south-west also stopped in the marketplace and the area that these streets delimited is set apart by a very dense parcellation.<sup>261</sup> The parallel outline of streets and the existence of a regular marketplace in the centre contradict the widespread assumption of Romanian historians, who believe that most towns grew spontaneously by themselves. Towns without a deliberate outline grew over time, without any specific order, along the roads that entered the settlement and converged into one central point, where both the marketplace and the seat of local authority existed (the ruler's residence). Instead, parallel streets developed as part of a planned evolution, since this type of development only partly relied on the course of older roads. These streets followed a straight line, indicating that they did not evolve by themselves, but following a precise indication of the plots that bordered them. The type of urban evolution based on two or more parallel streets, connected by a marketplace at the end can also be found in other Moldavian towns (Suceava, Iași), in Wallachia (Câmpulung, Pitești) or Transylvania (Sibiu, Cluj, Brașov, Bistrița).<sup>262</sup>

The town seal provides further arguments. It has a Latin legend, an obvious indication that it was created by and for a group of Catholic settlers: + S(IGILLUM) CIVIUM DE FORO ROMANI + (“+ The seal of townspeople in the *târg* of Roman +”). The form *cives* is also encountered in the legend on the seals for certain Hungarian towns.<sup>263</sup> Another difference from Baia is the mention of the town as *forum*, not

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<sup>259</sup> Greceanu, “La structure urbaine,” pp. 39–56; Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Pitești*; Emil Ioan Emandi, *Habitatul urban și cultura spațiului. Studiu de geografie istorică. Suceava în secolele XIV–XX* (Iași, 1996), pp. 263–268, 294–301; Gheorghiu, Radoslav, “Spațiul central,” pp. 154–173; Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, “Suceava medievală—geneză și evoluție până în prima parte a secolului al XVI-lea. Elemente morfo-structurale,” *HU*, vol. XII, no. 1–2 (2004), pp. 81–82.

<sup>260</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 139.

<sup>261</sup> Greceanu, “La structure urbaine,” pp. 41–53.

<sup>262</sup> Niedermaier, “Dezvoltarea urbanistică,” pp. 143–144.

<sup>263</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 475–476; Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 16–17.

as *civitas* or *oppidum*, hence as a *târg*, and not just any *târg*, but that “of Roman.”<sup>264</sup> The legend reveals that when the community was granted the right to self-representation by such an item, the settlement had not completely graduated to town status.

Since we have mentioned the seals, Roman and Baia are not the only towns in Moldavia to have Latin seals. Ștefan S. Gorovei has identified at least two others, in Neamț and Cotnari. A 1599 document bears “the grand seal” of Neamț, whose legend resembles that of Roman: S(IGILLUM) CIVIVM DE NIMCZ (“The seal of the townspeople of Neamț”). In Cotnari, a similar situation: SIGIL(LUM) OPIDI KOTHNAR (“The seal of the *târg* of Cotnari”).<sup>265</sup> Seals date back to the end of the 14th century and belonged to the settlers living in these towns. Otherwise, they would not have had a Latin legend, but a Slavonic one. Catholics settled in Neamț, Cotnari, Hârlău and Huși are mentioned later in sources, but there is a common element binding them: viticulture. All throughout Central and Eastern Europe, Wallon and German colonists contributed to a more efficient cultivation of vineyards. They crossed over from Transylvania and saw to wine-making near towns in Moldavia and Wallachia. Internal chronicles believe we owe Saxons and Hungarians the introduction of vineyards into Moldavia.<sup>266</sup> It was probably no accident that one of the first mentions of Saxons in internal documents relates them with wine growing. A 1437 mentions a land donated “where the Saxon vineyards were” in Neamț.<sup>267</sup> Sources mention more frequently the vineyards of Saxons, Hungarians, and even Armenians in Cotnari and Hârlău.<sup>268</sup> This is how grapevines and grapes came to feature on seals in Neamț, Hârlău and Cotnari.

There are data pointing to another *locatio* in Siret. It was here that field work, only partially complemented by archaeological excavations, have evidenced the existence in mid 14th century of two habitation cores:

<sup>264</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 66.

<sup>265</sup> Damian P. Bogdan, Ioana Vătămanu, “Acte moldovenești din secolul XVI referitoare la așezări din județul Neamț,” *Memoria Antiquitatis* (Piatra Neamț) vol. 4–5 (1972–1973), p. 248, doc. 8; Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” pp. 35–36.

<sup>266</sup> Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 233.

<sup>267</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 237, doc. 169.

<sup>268</sup> *Din tezaurul documentar sucevean. Catalog de documente (1393–1849)*, ed. Vasile Gh. Miron et al. (Bucharest, 1983), p. 68, doc. 94; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 78, doc. 96.



1. a settlement of tradesmen and craftsmen;
2. a possible stronghold on a nearby hill.

Since Siret was for at least several decades the capital of Moldavia, all historians believe this stronghold to have existed, but it still remains to be found. Only sparse traces of moats and palisades survived of the original fortification, as well as the Church of the Holy Trinity, one of the oldest in Moldavia. German colonists began arriving in the nearby settlement. Their vast presence is proven by Siret's mention in documents as an influential Catholic centre, but also by the grey ceramic that is associated with them. The settlers occupied the central area of the settlement, where research indicated high habitation density.<sup>269</sup> The dense dwellings, their line of work and the items uncovered led archaeologists to claim that in the latter half of the 14th century the settlement had the features of an urban centre.<sup>270</sup> Historical tradition, as recorded by Ion Neculce, credits Dragoş with the foundation (*descălecat*) of Siret.<sup>271</sup> His presence here is backed up by the nearby existence of a church in Volovăţ, where he was buried. We do not know whether Dragoş brought the settlers or not, but when Laţcu ruled, they were here, since this ruler had negotiated the creation of a bishopric in Siret in 1371. For the Catholics, but also for the Dominican monks arriving here, Margaret, mother to Petru I, built the church of St John the Baptist. The church's location, in the middle of the marketplace, shows the important role German settlers had in creating the town, its significance in the community being proven by St John's presence on the seal.<sup>272</sup> This is one of the few central marketplaces in Moldavia where a church stands in its middle. Only Suceava is another instance of this, with the Armenian church of St Mary. In other towns, the church or the churches only bordered the marketplace.

In Suceava, archaeological excavations indicate a substantial growth of the inhabited space for the end of the 14th century, which is apparently owed to the arrival of a group of foreigners. On a timeline,

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<sup>269</sup> Mircea D. Matei, "Câteva consideraţii pe marginea începuturilor oraşului Siret, în lumina celor mai recente descoperiri arheologice," *RMMMIA*, vol. XVII, no. 2 (1986), pp. 20–23.

<sup>270</sup> Matei, "Câteva consideraţii," pp. 23–25.

<sup>271</sup> Ion Neculce, *O samă de cuvinte*, ed. Gabriel Ştrempele (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 161–162.

<sup>272</sup> Vîrtosu, "Din sigilografia," pp. 476–477; DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

their arrival coincides with this town becoming a capital for the country under Petru I, who also built two strongholds near the town. We can easily identify the place where the Armenian community dwelled, in the north-west quarter of the town. Since they were mostly merchants, the Armenians had the marketplace as their landmark. In 1401, when the authority of the Armenian bishop in Poland also came to encompass Moldavia, the numbers of Armenians in Suceava ranged high, and they had always been a special group within the town. They elected their own representative (the *voit*) and 12 *pârgari*, offices which only had authority over their group, setting it apart within the town community.<sup>273</sup> However, we cannot accurately locate where Saxons and Hungarians settled, since no Catholic church of the time has survived to this day. The fine grey ceramic, which is attributed to Germans arriving from Poland, was found all over town, and in the neighbouring stronghold of Șcheia as well.<sup>274</sup> Previous researchers believed their presence here can only be related to the construction work on the ruler's palace and two nearby strongholds, but an expansion in the scope of items uncovered shows we are dealing with simple tradesmen and artisans.<sup>275</sup> An approach to the Catholic community in Suceava only becomes more intricate if we were to admit they built a Catholic church near the palace. A short distance from it, the church, relatively large, does give rise to certain dilemmas. The ruler would not have allowed any such construction to be built without setting up or allowing Catholics to settle in there, since the church catered to their spiritual needs and not to the Catholic entourage of the ruler, as it was claimed.<sup>276</sup> The palace also had within it (in the garden), its own Catholic church, whose inception stage is not however known.<sup>277</sup> To further complicate things, it was recently asserted that the church discovered near the palace actually housed an Orthodox monastery, dated 1395.<sup>278</sup> The identity of this building is still disputed, since it

<sup>273</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4; Rosetti, *Scrisori românești*, p. 32, doc. 5.

<sup>274</sup> Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc, "Din nou despre ceramica cenușie de la Suceava," *AM*, vol. 25 (2002), pp. 220–232.

<sup>275</sup> Diaconu, Constantinescu, *Cetatea Șcheia*, pp. 72–82; Mircea D. Matei, *Contribuții arheologice la istoria orașului Suceava* (Bucharest, 1963), pp. 48–57, 131–151; Batariuc, "Din nou despre ceramica," p. 232.

<sup>276</sup> Mircea D. Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală românească. Contribuții (Suceava până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)* (Bucharest, 1989), pp. 59–60.

<sup>277</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 25, p. 182.

<sup>278</sup> DH, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 18, doc. 41; Năsturel, "D'un document byzantin," pp. 345–351.

had a pair of towers by its facade, towers which are not a feature in Orthodox buildings. This church, whether Catholic or not, vanished at the beginning of the 15th century. Further north, a new Catholic church emerged.<sup>279</sup>

To identify a *locatio* in Suceava, we must take another look at the topography of the place. Modern outlines confirm the existence of a central, trapezium-shaped marketplace in Suceava, which was later broken down into two sub-markets. Urbanistic research by Emil Ioan Emandi showed that the initial outline and surface for this marketplace were of around 20 hectares, while the town had around 100 hectares in the Middle Ages. This data brings Suceava closer to similar towns in the Polish and German areas.<sup>280</sup> The marketplace also relied on the Saxons settling in at the end of the 14th century, on the north-east side, and of the Armenians, on the north-west. The relatively regulated features of the area, as well as the two parallel streets that developed at its end indicate a certain parcellation of the land. Later outlines confirm a high density in plots, which were rectangular in shape. As with other towns, the narrow side of the plot, facing the street, had the houses aligned contiguously.<sup>281</sup> This judicious land use is backed up by archaeological research, which located the cellars beneath the medieval houses.<sup>282</sup> To conclude, in Suceava, the grounds for this town's emergence involved two separate groups, the Saxons and the Armenians, who could only settle in the marketplace and near the ruler's palace with his consent and support. There are similar elements of urban topography in Bacău, Hârlău, Botoșani, Iași and in other towns.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>279</sup> Gh. Diaconu, "Contribuții la cunoașterea culturii medievale de la Suceava în veacurile XV–XVI," *MCA*, vol. 6 (1959), pp. 913–923; *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 181–182.

<sup>280</sup> Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 299–300.

<sup>281</sup> Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 263–268; *Atlas istoric al orașelor din România*, series A, *Moldova*, fasc. 1, *Suceava. Städtegeschichtsatlas Rumäniens*, Reihe A, *Moldau*, 1. *Suceava*, ed. Mircea D. Matei (Bucharest, 2005), maps V–VII.

<sup>282</sup> Gh. Diaconu, "Observații cu privire la urmele vechiului târg al Sucevei în vremea marilor asedii otomane și polone din veacul al XV-lea," *SMIM*, vol. I (1956), pp. 267–274; Mircea D. Matei, Emil I. Emandi, *Cetatea de scaun și curtea domnească din Suceava* (Bucharest, 1988), pp. 158–162.

<sup>283</sup> Eugenia Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Botoșani* (Bucharest, 1981), pp. 48, 53–54, 71–74; Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, "Arhitectura subterană. Despre structurile urbane subterane medievale românești," *Arhitectura*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1988), pp. 43–45.

We may identify newcomers also with the help of the grey ceramic that we have mentioned above. Elena Busuioc wrote a book on the ceramics commonly used in medieval Moldavia and reached some interesting conclusions. In most towns in north-western Moldavia, we may notice a relatively abrupt introduction of grey ceramic in the latter half of the 14th century, unspecific to this area. This type of fine ceramic, also called “Gothic” has been known in Northern Europe ever since the 12th–13th centuries and was characterised by second firing, a vast array of items (handled pots, jars, bowls, caps, glasses) and a motif applied with the engraving wheel or stamped in. The ceramic of this kind bears similarity mostly with that in Polish, but also Hungarian towns. The shapes and motifs in the Transylvanian grey ceramic are not similar to those in Moldavia, so it is believed that German colonists from the north are responsible for introducing it east of the Carpathians. There were discoveries in Siret, Suceava, Roman, Baia, Cernăuți, Pietra lui Crăciun, Bacău, Troțuș, Adjud, Hârlău, Orheiul Vechi and Iași. After a while, we may notice that the methods employed in the making of this type of ceramic were adopted by local artisans. They were less receptive to the forms of this ceramic, and it gradually disappears in the former half of the 15th century. The ceramic criterion must not be the absolute measure in our research, but, with documentary evidence lacking, we may use it, especially for the period when this new kind of ceramic was introduced in Moldavia.<sup>284</sup>

But under what terms did settlers come into Moldavia? Did they arrive here by accident or were they called in and settled by someone? One pattern of colonization can be found in the Galician Rus'. In the town of Halych, sources mention Germans even before the first Mongol attacks: in 1234, a “German gate” is mentioned here.<sup>285</sup> The “German Law” began being enforced in this area shortly before its coming under Poland control, from where it was adopted. In 1339, Boleslaw of Mazovia grants this right to inhabitants settled in Sanok. The bringing in of *hospites* and the granting of “German Law” were mostly economically motivated. Mongol attacks had taken their toll on

<sup>284</sup> Elena Busuioc, *Ceramica de uz comun nesmălțuită din Moldova (secolul al XIV-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)* (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 47–48, 71–73; see also Matei, *Contribuții arheologice*, pp. 131–160; Batariuc, “Din nou despre ceramica,” pp. 219–235. For the gray ceramic in Transylvania, see Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, p. 88–90.

<sup>285</sup> Hugo Weczerka, *Das Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Deutschtum im Fürstentum Moldau vom seinen Anfängen bis zu seinem Untergang (13.–18. Jahrhundert)* (München, 1960), p. 42, note 12.

local economy, shattering the foothold that large towns had in international trade. The newcomers were attracted by legal liberties and tax exemptions, as well as the incentive to become involved in trade on the new routes linking the Black Sea to the Baltic.<sup>286</sup> The transition to “German Law” was hastened in the Galician Rus’ after it came under Polish control in 1349 and 1366–1367 (for its eastern parts). Kolomyia, a royal town, received the Magdeburg law under Casimir III, but the original document was lost to time. At the end of the 14th century, the town had an *advocatus*. The community in a nearby royal town, Sniatyn, was granted its new rights in the same period (in 1423, an *advocatus* is mentioned).<sup>287</sup>

The settlers were invited by the monarchs. To settle the colonists and acknowledge their new legal status, Moldavian rulers could draw mostly on the colonization experience of their neighbours, especially the ones further north. The move to adapt to the principles of the “German Law” in towns of former Galicia had begun shortly before the towns in Moldavia began emerging. The Moldavian rulers could directly examine how the new system functioned near their country, since they held temporary dominion over several towns north of the border. The loan granted in 1388 by Petru I to the King Władysław Jagiełło stated that, in case it was not refunded in three years, the prince would seize the land acting as guarantee, namely the stronghold at Halych and its land.<sup>288</sup> Later data confirms that Petru I’s inheritor, Roman I, took over one part of the guarantee, Pokuttya more specifically.<sup>289</sup> The strongholds and the towns of Kolomyia and Sniatyn were here, and they were already recipients of the Magdeburg law. Most likely, the list of Kiev refers to Roman I’s dominion, since it places Kolomyia together with his possession in Baia, Țețina or Hotin.<sup>290</sup> Ștefan I relinquished his claims over these towns (1395),<sup>291</sup> as did Alexandru the Good, but only in the early parts of his rule.<sup>292</sup> The Pokuttya

<sup>286</sup> Olha Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development and German Law in Galician Rus’ during the Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries* (PhD dissertation, Central European University, 2007), pp. 61–64.

<sup>287</sup> Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 140–142.

<sup>288</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, pp. 603–605, doc. 164.

<sup>289</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 609, doc. 166.

<sup>290</sup> *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475; Andronic, “Orașe moldovenesti,” pp. 210, 214.

<sup>291</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 609, doc. 166.

<sup>292</sup> Alexandru the Good lays to waste Pokuttya in 1431; his son, Ștefan, regulates the border with Poland in 1433 (Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 660, doc. 183-C; Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldo-polone,” pp. 102–103).

area would still be a bone of contention between Moldavia and Poland until the 16th century.<sup>293</sup>

Following a model they adopted from their neighbours, the first rulers of Moldavia encouraged the settling of expert craftsmen and merchants, as they consolidated their rule. Their presence and activity only had effects on settlements where they settled, but also on the economy of the state and the ruler's income. The newcomers did not arrive here by accident, since it is hard to believe they would have exchanged a climate of relative political and economic stability for a new, precarious land. Therefore, we may consider an organized and thorough colonization for Moldavia as well.<sup>294</sup> Official documents make only cursory mention of how the settlers were brought here. The reason for the scarcity of data has to do with most of these communities being assimilated or leaving the country, especially in a 16th century that was fraught with turmoil. The few remaining or those replacing them (the Greeks) saw no reason to preserve their documents. Of the few documents kept, a 1453 one is of particular interest. Alexandru II acknowledged to the monastery of Iațco the right to found a village, by bringing in foreign settlers in Suceava's vicinity:

And whoever will they call, be they from foreign country or from Poland or from our own country, all these people [...] will be free to plough and sow grains and mow hay on the domain of the *târg* of Suceava, as are the townspeople [...]. These people are hereby declared free, be they craftsmen or makers of sheepskin coats or any manner of craftsmen, be they Russian or Greek or of any language they might speak, they are not to pay duty [...]. These people are to be free and to be allowed free passage with pots or with salt or after fish [...] wherever they travel within our country, buying and selling in towns and in villages, and they are not to pay customs duty [...]. Neither the *vornics* of Suceava, nor any others are to hinder these people, nor to judge them or ask anything of them. An who will find that these people do them injustice is to call them before the prioress or before me, and no other judge should call them to trial [...].<sup>295</sup>

The cited case indicates colonists settled on the outskirts of an already existing town. The documents shows that the ruler encouraged

<sup>293</sup> Ștefan the Great occupies Pokuttya in 1502, towards the end of his reign (Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 463, doc. CLXXXV).

<sup>294</sup> Teodor Octavian Gheorghiu, "Urbanizarea medievală românească extracarpatică—gest oficial major sau pură întâmplare?," *HU*, vol. XIV, no. 2 (2006), pp. 233–251.

<sup>295</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 38, doc. 28.

colonists to settle near a religious institution, exempting them from taxes and customs duties. The Russians are the first ones mentioned, since numerous Ruthenians lived in northern Moldavia, and were often referred to as “Russian,” while the Greeks started entering the Balkans as the Ottoman Empire made strides towards the Danube. Even though we are dealing here with people dependent on a monastery, we may notice they are granted every right to practice their trade. They can use the town domain (*tarina*) just as any other townspeople, can carry goods around the country and have their own legal status. Despite no specific reference to this in the document, it is also possible that the newcomers were allowed to elect a representative who would answer on behalf of those settled here in front of the monastery’s prioress. Even though their original status was different, the colonists were occupationally merged with the townspeople in time. In 1616, when the same monastery receives a confirmation of its right to bring in colonists, donations specific to the townspeople are mentioned, such as the *camena* (the wax duty). In their case, the duty was collected by the monastery and not by the prince.<sup>296</sup> This group was not fully merged with the townspeople since they had different owners: some were under the authority of the church, others, under that of the ruler. On another level, a similar phenomenon occurred in the early days of many towns. Colonists around an older local settlement received privileged status. As long as the inhabitants of the ancient settlement relied on the ruler, this status could have been later extended to them as well.

Colonisation was both urban, and rural. Documents often refer to places “in the wild,” where villages were to be founded, with people from neighbouring states but also from within the country.<sup>297</sup> Archaeological research shows that, under Mongol domination, the number of settlements decreased in Moldavia, and repopulation had only intensified after 1350. Almost all settlements discovered in the 13th–14th centuries are located in the northern half of Moldavia, where the first settlements clustered, but by no accident. It was only at the turn of the 15th century and throughout that colonisation reaches southward.<sup>298</sup> Urban colonisation is backed by other circumstantial evidence, indi-

<sup>296</sup> *Din tezaurul*, p. 98, doc. 176.

<sup>297</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 91, doc. 63; p. 104, doc. 71; p. 107, doc. 73.

<sup>298</sup> N. Zaharia, Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Em. Zaharia, *Ayezăni*, pp. 141–143, 148.

cating that the rulers encouraged foreigners to settle in. They received the right to organize following their own rules, bowing to the authority of the ruler. Colonists were first of all granted the power to elect a representative, who had the right to hold trial over his community, a major component in the “German Law.”<sup>299</sup> This goes for Saxons, Hungarians, and for Armenians as well, each group having its first original leader. The name of these representatives is derived from German. The communities of townspeople are represented by the *șoltuz*, a derivative of the German *Schultheiss* (Lat. *scultetus*), a name which had a somewhat altered form in Poland, *sołtys* / *syoltys*. The fact that this name finally gained the upper hand in entire Moldavia shows that, among the first colonists, the Saxons weighed significantly. Instead, the Armenians called their leader *voit*, from German *Vogt* (Lat. *advocatus*), who followed a Polish venue, via *wójt*.<sup>300</sup> This name found only secondary use in towns, so Armenians come second to Saxons among the colonists. Hungarians called the leader of their community a *biró*, but this name was only used locally.<sup>301</sup> Regardless of their ethnicity, settlers used the experience already gleaned in their lands of origin to introduce new institutions where they arrived. In Moldavia, a dominantly Orthodox country, they also received the right to practice religion and erect their own places of worship.<sup>302</sup> Only the presence of newcomers can explain the vast numbers of old Catholic and Armenian churches in the towns of the country. Settlers also garnered the right to inherit lands within the towns. All combined, these rights set apart communities in Moldavia and create privileges that may be associated with the “German Law.” Some historians deny the existence of these documents on the grounds that none was preserved, while others accept that towns had “a right of their own,” which supposedly reunited local and foreign legal elements.<sup>303</sup> It is not our belief that settlers would have entered an unknown territory on the outskirts of Europe, with a prevailing Orthodox population, had they not received the documents acknowledging their rights. Ever since the 13th century, all throughout

<sup>299</sup> Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 206–207.

<sup>300</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 320–321; Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 210–213.

<sup>301</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 751, doc. 1454.

<sup>302</sup> In the 18th century, it was still known in Moldavia that Catholic churches date back to “the foundation of the country” (*Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Iași*, vol. V, ed. Ioan Caproșu [Iași, 2001], p. 499, doc. 765).

<sup>303</sup> Matei, *Geneză și evoluție*, pp. 249–250; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, p. 319.



Europe, written documents begin noting every administrative practice, be it public or private.<sup>304</sup> In Germany, Poland, or Hungary, settlers were granted certification of their status, especially after towns entered their “modernization” stage, following their adherence to the “German law.” Moldavia has preserved two privileges, for Vaslui and Bârlad, which include only a part of townspeople rights. Privileges were lost in all other towns where they existed. The next chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of this subject.

In Moldavia, Germans received the same name they had in Transylvania, Wallachia or Serbia, namely that of *sași*. The ruler of Moldavia addresses the “*sași* of Baia” twice in 1453, indicating they were seen as a community.<sup>305</sup> Their presence left tangible marks in the structure of the towns, as well as on the place and water names in the north-western part of the country: there is a *Sas* creek, a *Sas* valley, a settlement and a river by the name of *Sasca*, etc.<sup>306</sup> Hungarians are no less visible in their influence. In the salt mines near Trotuș, the salt cutters were called *șangăi*, *șalgăi*, a derivative of the Hungarian *sóvágó*.<sup>307</sup> The grand fairs held regularly near the towns also have a Hungarian name, *bâlci*, from Hungarian *bucsu* (*bolcsú*), which originally indicated an assembly held for a religious event.<sup>308</sup> The Hungarian name of some towns in mid Moldavia is another argument for the contribution of these settlers to urbanization. Had they been mostly inhabited by Romanians, these towns would not have had foreign names. Documents mention Baia as *Bani* or *Bania*, from the Hungarian word for mine, *bánya*, a word adopted as such and understood in the entire area of Romanian habitation.<sup>309</sup> There are settlements called Baia in Transylvania as well (Baia Mare, Baia Sprie, Baia de Arieș) and Wallachia (Baia de Fier, Baia de Aramă).<sup>310</sup> Most of them had settlers moving in. The name of

<sup>304</sup> For the spreading of writing in medieval society, see Richard Britnell, “Pragmatic Literacy in Latin Christendom,” in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200–1330*, ed. Richard Britnell (Suffolk, 1997), pp. 3–24; the Polish case is discussed by Anna Adamska, “From Memory to Written Record” in the Periphery of Medieval Latinitas: the Case of Poland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in *Charters and the use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. Karl Heidecker (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 83–100.

<sup>305</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 34, doc. 26; p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>306</sup> *Marele dicționar geografic*, vol. V, pp. 319–320.

<sup>307</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom XI, part 1, p. 13; N. Iorga, “Privilegiile șangăilor de la Târgu Ocna,” *AARMSI*, 2nd series, vol. 37 (1914–1915), pp. 245–263.

<sup>308</sup> Pop, “Sinonimele cuvântului,” p. 51.

<sup>309</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 61, doc. 42; p. 80, doc. 55; p. 343, doc. 242.

<sup>310</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 52.

the town of Bacău comes from a person's name, *Bako*,<sup>311</sup> and the name of Adjud has a similar provenance, from a certain *Egyd*.<sup>312</sup> In some cases, the arrival of colonists led to changes in settlement names, the older ones coexisting with the new for a while. Baia is the new name, which gradually supersedes the older one of *Moldova*. Another instance of this is Hârlău, where the new name, probably Hungarian in origin as well, changes the old name of *Bachlovia*. The towns of Troțuș and Botoșani are also Hungarian in origin. Suceava, whose name chroniclers attributed to the Hungarian *szűcs* (= "furrier"), can also complete this list.<sup>313</sup> Some settlements in the Prut-Dniester area are a special case: the name of the town of Orhei comes from Hungarian *várhéllly* ("place of the stronghold"), as does the name of future Chișinău (from *Kisjenő*—Jeno the Small).<sup>314</sup> The easternmost point where Hungarians settled in Moldavia is on the Dniester, in Cioburciu (from the person name of *Csobor*).<sup>315</sup>

### *Terminology*

Slavonic documents written in Moldavia use various terms to refer to settlements with an urban character: *trăg*, *grad*, *miasto* and, less frequently, *varoș*.<sup>316</sup> While Wallachia relied mostly on the last word of this series, *trăg* or its Romanian derivative *târg* prevail in Moldavian documents. The first sources shed light on the meaning of town assigned to this word, a meaning which goes by the original and main purpose of urban settlements in this area, that of trading post. In all, we have identified four meanings for the term *târg* in Moldavia:

1. town;
2. a settlement with an intermediary status, neither a town, nor a village, with a mainly commercial purpose;

<sup>311</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 187; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 117, doc. CCXI; DRH, A, I, p. 34, doc. 24; p. 195, doc. 141.

<sup>312</sup> DRH, C, X, p. 48, doc. 53; p. 63, doc. 65; p. 81, doc. 80.

<sup>313</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 65; N. Drăganu, *Toponimie și istorie* (Cluj, 1928), p. 69.

<sup>314</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 310.

<sup>315</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 22, 284–285, 508; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 422.

<sup>316</sup> Details in Renate Möhlenkamp, "Zur Bezeichnung der Moldauischen Städte in den Quellen des Mittelalters," in *Östliches Europa Spiegel der Geschichte*, ed. Carsten Gochrke et al. (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 171–192.

3. a marketplace, a trading place with shopping booths;
4. a fair.

One of the first sources to include the term *târg* with a direct reference to the Romanian area is the Russian list at 1387–1396, where two such settlements are noted: Târgul Iașilor and Târgul lui Roman.<sup>317</sup> The *târg* of Roman is also mentioned two times in 1408, in Alexandru the Good's privilege and in a document passed by this prince for a church in town.<sup>318</sup> In 1411, Roman is called Târgul de Jos (The Lower Târg), owing to its position at the southern end of the Moldova river valley.<sup>319</sup> In 1422, Bârlad is also mentioned as a *târg*,<sup>320</sup> and it is from this point on that towns under this name prevail in documents issued by the chancellery. The town inhabitants are referred to as *torgovice-ani* (Rom. *târgovești*).<sup>321</sup> The messages or ordinances by rulers towards towns were addressed towards *târgs*,<sup>322</sup> and trade privileges often mention the merchants' right to trade in *târgs*.<sup>323</sup> This name is also placed on smaller settlements, which shared no urban status: Târgul Săratei is one instance of this; this settlement never became a town.<sup>324</sup>

The second term used for towns is *grad* or *gorod*, but it only rarely features with this meaning. The main meaning of the term in Moldavia was that of *cetate* ("stronghold"). This meaning is noted in the following: the stronghold of Suceava (1388), the stronghold of Kilia (1435), the stronghold of Neamț (1443), the stronghold of Hotin (1453) etc.<sup>325</sup> In 1392, Roman I issues a document from "our stronghold, of voivode Roman,"<sup>326</sup> while Alexandru the Good confirms in 1401 the foundation of the Armenian bishopric in Moldavia and its coming under the authority of the bishop at Lviv, who gains temporary residence in "our

<sup>317</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>318</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, I, p. 32, doc. 23.

<sup>319</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 637, doc. 177.

<sup>320</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 75, doc. 51.

<sup>321</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 179, doc. 127.

<sup>322</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 321, doc. 221.

<sup>323</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; p. 667, doc. 186; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. CXXVIII; p. 315, doc. CXL.

<sup>324</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 91, doc. 50.

<sup>325</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 603, doc. 164; p. 681, doc. 192; DRH, A, I, p. 342, doc. 241; II, p. 45, doc. 33.

<sup>326</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.

stronghold,” Suceava. The ruler’s residence is called “seat” (*stol*).<sup>327</sup> In its meaning of town, *grad* features in a 1449 privilege granted to the merchants in Braşov, who are allowed free travel “through towns and *târgs*” (*po gorodom i po tovgovom*).<sup>328</sup> Latin documents usually translate *grad* by *castrum*. The stronghold of Neamţ is referred to as such in 1395, as King Sigismund of Luxemburg led an incursion into Moldavia.<sup>329</sup> The fortress in Suceava is also termed as such later on.<sup>330</sup> The term *arx* is also used in reference to fortresses.<sup>331</sup>

Medieval Slavonic documents in Moldavia make only sparse mention of the word *varoş*. We have first located it in a document passed by Ilie I referring to townspeople (*oraşane*) in Bacău who were to turn over the customs house income to the monastery in Bistriţa.<sup>332</sup> It also designates the townspeople in a confirmation of the privilege granted to Braşov by Ştefan the Great (1472).<sup>333</sup> Ever since late 16th century, the term gains widespread acceptance, probably under Wallachian influence.<sup>334</sup>

The presence of substantial Catholic communities, the economic ties they had with towns in Poland and Transylvania, as well as the close terms between the rulers of Moldavia and the Polish and Hungarian kings led to a significant number of Latin documents issued, larger than those in Wallachia. The oldest internal document preserved was passed in 1384, and features the town of Siret as a *civitas*, capturing the status of bishop’s see that Siret had since 1371.<sup>335</sup> Bacău is also called a *civitas* in 1431, also as a bishop’s see.<sup>336</sup> However, the context dictated that these towns bear the most frequent Latin term in internal documents, *oppidum*. Baia features as an *oppidum* in an document issued by the townspeople,<sup>337</sup> and Suceava, Neamţ and Hârlău,

<sup>327</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 21, doc. 14.

<sup>328</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 407, doc. 297.

<sup>329</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 130, doc. 82.

<sup>330</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan*, vol. II, p. 470, doc. CXC.

<sup>331</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan*, vol. II, p. 465, doc. CLXXXVI; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 569, doc. 1052; M. Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti de la Bogdan voievod (1504–1517)* (Bucharest, 1940), p. 502, doc. 82; p. 506, doc. 85.

<sup>332</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 283, doc. 200.

<sup>333</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan*, vol. II, p. 315, doc. 140.

<sup>334</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 310, doc. 376; p. 365, doc. 449; IV, p. 238, doc. 292.

<sup>335</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1. One year earlier, in 1370, Siret is featured as an *oppidum* (DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 160, doc. CXXIV).

<sup>336</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 64–65.

<sup>337</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 203, doc. CCCLXVI.

in documents drafted in the ruler's chancellery.<sup>338</sup> Roman features as a *forum* in a letter by Ilie I or in some documents passed by Ștefan the Great.<sup>339</sup> The town of Iași is also mentioned as *forum Filistinorum* in 1450–1451 and 1475.<sup>340</sup> In most cases, the chancellery clerks would actually translate the term *târg* from Old Slavonic documents. In 1421, Siret is called *oppidum*, and not *civitas*.<sup>341</sup> Whereas the latter term was preferred when the purpose of bishop's see was relevant, there are also cases when *civitas* is used in the chancellery to separate small and large towns.<sup>342</sup> For instance, Adjud is an *oppidum* in 1437, but the document mentions the merchants who could trade “in any town or *târg* of ours” (*in quacumque civitate vel opido*).<sup>343</sup> This phrase looked at the status and the importance of those towns. When towns in the country were approached in general terms, *civitas* was employed (*omnibus civitatibus*, 1457).<sup>344</sup> In the town seal, Baia is called a *civitas*, capturing the importance this centre had when Moldavia took its first steps towards state emergence.<sup>345</sup> A bishopric would later be founded here. In 1444, Vaslui, never before a bishop's see, is called a *civitas*. The explanation is simple: Ștefan II had his main residence in this town, and the clerks in his chancellery could not place Vaslui between small towns, called *oppidum*, and preferred calling it *civitas*. The clerks knew Latin and some were Catholic. Evidence to this is their knowledge of the Catholic calendar, some documents being dated by the events in this calendar. The 1444 document was issued “on the Friday after the celebration of Pope Urban,” something that only a Catholic could have known in a mostly Orthodox country.<sup>346</sup>

A series of documents by Saxon townspeople are written in German. As a *Stadt*, Baia is mentioned in an original letter sent by *Groff*

<sup>338</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 305, doc. DLVIII; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 467, doc. CLXXXVII; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan*, pp. 497–499, doc. 79–80.

<sup>339</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 323, doc. 224; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 359, doc. CLX; p. 369, doc. CLXV.

<sup>340</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 412, doc. 301; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 330, doc. CXLVI.

<sup>341</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48; Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 779, doc. 230.

<sup>342</sup> Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” pp. 36–37.

<sup>343</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207.

<sup>344</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 259, doc. CXXIV.

<sup>345</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” p. 465.

<sup>346</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 374, doc. 271.

und Gersworn Burger der Stat Molde to the town of Bistrița.<sup>347</sup> Kilia is also a *Stadt*, but the document in point is written by an inhabitant of Sibiu.<sup>348</sup> The author of the *Cronica moldo-germană* uses *Markt* when mentioning Roman (in original: *Romass margk*), whereas Baia features as a *Hauptstadt* (in original: *Haubstat Mulda*), and Suceava as a *Stadt*.<sup>349</sup> The term *Markt* is also associated with Hârlău in a Latin document, even though it should have occurred in a German text.<sup>350</sup> A German writing associates it with Baia (in original: *Mark Banyä*).<sup>351</sup> We have only approached original sources, since a series of late German translations has been preserved, that usually translate “town” as *Stadt*, and fortress as *Burg*.<sup>352</sup> Several Hungarian names for towns in Moldavia have also been kept. Roman is called *Roman vasar* even in Latin documents.<sup>353</sup> Around 1528, Georg Reicherstorffer mentioned the Hungarian names for the towns of Huși (*Hwztwarus*), Troțuș (*Tartharos*) or Roman (*Romanwasar*).<sup>354</sup> A future mention refers to *Romanwasahel* and *Szeretwasarhel*.<sup>355</sup> Documents in German and Hungarian multiplied in the 16th century on account of the Reform.

We have saved for last a special feature in Moldavian urban terminology: the term *miasto*, of Polish origin. One of the first few Old Slavonic documents where we have found it dates back to 1421 and is related to the Polish environment. Alexandru the Good and the grand boyars of the country transfer the rights that the ruler held in Siret to his former wife, Ringaila (baptized Elizabeth), a cousin of the Polish king and sister of the grand duke of Lithuania. In the Slavonic version of the document, Siret is designated as a *misto*, and in the Latin one, as *oppidum*.<sup>356</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu believed all terms used by the ruler’s chancellery to indicate urban settlements were synonymous and had the same referent. The ethnicity or the culture of the clerk made the difference. As Giurescu has it, *trăg* was the oldest and the

<sup>347</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. LIV.

<sup>348</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 440, doc. 323.

<sup>349</sup> The German version of this chronicle at Olgierd Górká, *Cronica epocii lui Ștefan cel Mare (1457–1499)* (Bucharest, 1937), pp. 113, 130–131.

<sup>350</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 569, doc. MLIV. For Iași (*Jasmarkth*), see *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 132.

<sup>351</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 644, doc. MCXCV.

<sup>352</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 23, doc. 16; p. 392, doc. 276.

<sup>353</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 317, doc. CXLI.

<sup>354</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 198–199; vol. II, p. 139.

<sup>355</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 208.

<sup>356</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48.

most frequent, *miasto* indicates a Russian and Polish influence, and *varoș* designates a Transylvanian influence.<sup>357</sup>

For us to better understand the meanings of the term *miasto* and its derivatives, we must look at the neighbouring areas. In Poland, along with *targ*, which indicated a trading post, the term *miejsce* (*mieście*, *miasto*) gains favour, as it was the counterpart of *locus* from Latin sources. The term is ever more used as the *locatio* intensifies, capturing the new social and economic status of communities involved in this process. *Miasto* supersedes the older *gród* in Polish documents, whereas *targ* begins losing linguistic ground.<sup>358</sup> There is a similar evolution in the former Galician Rus'. Recent research by Olha Kozubska-Andrusiv indicate that towns here entered a course of legal development in the 14th century, associated with changes in terminology. As the settlements undergoing urbanization received the Magdeburg law, the previous terms of *hrad* or *gród* were replaced by *miasto*.<sup>359</sup> Dimitrie Ciurea was among the first to note a certain difference between *trăg*, which prevails in Moldavian sources, and *miasto*. The last term reveals that the chancellery felt the need to draw a line between various types of towns.<sup>360</sup> Victor Spinei believes that the use of *trăg*, *gorod* or *miasto* is indicative of different degrees of development in urban settlements. The more important were supposedly called *gorod*, while the smaller ones were the *miasto*.<sup>361</sup> As for us, we believe this distinction did not involve the settlement and its size (since references obviously targeted a town), but the type of community living there.

Most documents including the term *miasto* date back to the 15th century. External documents mention it on several occasions, especially in relation to Poland, indicating that the clerks in the ruler's chancellery were aware of its importance. We will find it in all privileges granted by Moldavian rulers to the merchants in Lviv (1408, 1434, 1456, 1460).<sup>362</sup> After Ilie I and Ștefan II reached an agreement in 1435, Ilie writes to the Polish king, informing him of his actions. Two of the towns donated to Ștefan, Vaslui and Tecuci, are called *misto*, while Bârlad is

<sup>357</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 104–105.

<sup>358</sup> Gieysztor, "From Forum to Civitas," pp. 13–16.

<sup>359</sup> Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 32–35.

<sup>360</sup> Ciurea, "Noi considerații," p. 25.

<sup>361</sup> Spinei, "Începuturile vieții urbane," p. 291.

<sup>362</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; p. 667, doc. 186; p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. CXXVIII.

noted as a *trăg*.<sup>363</sup> In 1462, Ștefan the Great pledges allegiance to King Casimir IV and promises never to disunite “any country, county, town (*miasto*) or tenure” without his consent.<sup>364</sup> The final period of Ștefan’s reign has provided us with a 1496 text documenting some Moldavian envoys coming from Wallachia and the Ottoman Empire, who told the prince that “a call is made, in all fortresses and towns (*mesto*), for all good soldiers and sound men to mount and leave to war.”<sup>365</sup>

The term is also present in internal documents. In 1490, Ștefan the Great donates the taxes of ten churches to the monastery of Putna, among them two of the Cernăuți *miasto*,<sup>366</sup> acknowledges a privilege for the Bârlad *miasto* prior to 1495,<sup>367</sup> and makes a donation off the wax he received from the *miasto* of Neamț in 1503.<sup>368</sup> Official chronicles use this word several time: in *Letopiseșul anonim al Moldovei*, we will find Suceava mentioned twice as a *miasto*,<sup>369</sup> Hârlău once,<sup>370</sup> while Roman is more often called a *târg*, as is Cernăuți.<sup>371</sup> Why did the author(s) of the chronicle, written in the seat at Suceava choose *miasto* for some towns, and *târg* for others? They were obviously aware of its meaning as “town,” since they use it with the other Slavonic meaning as well, that of “place”: “in the place called Hreasca.”<sup>372</sup> *Cronica moldo-rusă* is different in this regard, since it credits Dragoș and the settlers he brought with the foundation of the first towns (called *miasto*), Baia included.<sup>373</sup>

There are documents where *miasto* is used in reference to the inhabitants of towns. Suceava is one such case, where a 1449 record notes the townspeople (the *meastici*) intervening in a trial.<sup>374</sup> Neamț is similar: in 1455, the inhabitants are called *mistici*.<sup>375</sup> The same in Roman,

<sup>363</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>364</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 282, doc. CXXIX.

<sup>365</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 396, doc. CLXXIII.

<sup>366</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 135, doc. 73; p. 140, doc. 74.

<sup>367</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151.

<sup>368</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 520, doc. 293.

<sup>369</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>370</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 12.

<sup>371</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 7, 10, 11.

<sup>372</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 7.

<sup>373</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 156, 160.

<sup>374</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4.

<sup>375</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 62, doc. 45.



1458, and Hârlău, 1499, where the name *measceane* is used for two inhabitants, Hungarian by name.<sup>376</sup>

Even though the cited documents are not exactly lavish with clues, they do include some hints which invite interpretation. Among others, the 1408 privilege of Alexandru the Good included the right of the merchants of Lviv to sell in the *târgs* of Moldavia, but also the possibility to have a household in Suceava, without being able to use it for commercial purposes. Those wishing to do so were supposed to pay the same taxes “as the town” (called *miasto*). All other references to towns in the document used the term *torg*, only that related to Suceava does not. The mentioned taxes were paid not by the town, but by the community living there, which enjoyed special status. This provision and its related phrasing were kept in the acknowledgements of this privilege as well, the ones passed by Ștefan II, Petru Aron, and Ștefan the Great.<sup>377</sup> In 1436, Ilie I pledges his allegiance to King Władysław III of Poland. The prince obeys the king with “all our council [...], with nobles from strongholds, towns (*miasti*), counties [...].”<sup>378</sup> Several days later, Ilie returns to the king the land of Șepeniț with all the accompanying strongholds, counties and towns (*miasta*).<sup>379</sup> In the 1496 text documenting the call to arms to the towns and strongholds of Wallachia, towns are termed *miasto*.<sup>380</sup> Despite the reference to Wallachia, the author is Moldavian and the word is used not in its territorial, but social sense. It addressed a specific group of people, the town communities, since the call to arms was one of the duties they were required to perform.

The cited internal documents bring important additions to the meaning of *miasto*. In the 1449 text on Suceava, several inhabitants take part in a trial. When they are called as witnesses, they are referred to as “good people, townspeople” (*meastici*), the names including two *voits*, one Armenian and the other Saxon, as well as a customs officer. Therefore, they were not just urban rank and file, but members of the town patriciate, which reunited some of the most powerful ethnic groups in town. In the 1455 document, Alexandru II donated to a

<sup>376</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70; III, p. 438, doc. 246.

<sup>377</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 667, doc. 186; p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. CXXXVIII.

<sup>378</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 697, doc. 201.

<sup>379</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 706, doc. 203.

<sup>380</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 396, doc. CLXXIII.

monastery one tract of land “that the townspeople (*mistici*) of Neamț attempted to sell [to someone else].” Interestingly enough, the townspeople of Neamț are later on mentioned by two terms: on the one hand, they are *mistici*, on the other, they are “the people of the *târg*,” and not “the people” in *miasto*, as we would expect. Not all those living in town fell under the designation of *mistici*. A similar situation in 1458: the same sentence mentions the *șoltuți*, *pârgari*, the “officials of the *târg*,” and the townspeople (*mistici*). This document acknowledges the control of the Orthodox Metropolitan Church in Roman over some villages, one of them near the town. The inhabitants of these villages, “regardless of their language,” are exempted from taxes and do not come under the authority of town representatives: “they cannot be put to trial by the *șoltuți* or the *pârgari*,” nor by the ruler’s judges. The clear line that this document draws between the “paupers” in the suburb and the “townspeople” shows that the terms attached to these categories carried legal weight. In this case, both groups were settler groups, but they could not share the same designation. Even though the “paupers” were granted various tax and labour exemptions, they were placed under the control of the metropolitan, while the “townspeople” were free, had their privileges and only responded to the prince.

In 1435, only Vaslui and Tecuci feature as *misto*, and Bârlad as a *trăg*. In our analysis, we have to make allowance for a possible recent granting of privileges in the two towns. This might be why the clerk writing the document used *misto* only in their case. Even though Bârlad is called a *trăg*, this does not mean that the community here did not have special status. The proof comes by studying the privilege granted to Bârlad by Ștefan the Great prior to 1495 (the exact date is unknown). The privilege was granted by demand of the *șoltuți* or *pârgari* and “townspeople in our town of Bârlad,” as well as by demand of “all the paupers in villages reliant on this town.” The townspeople are called *meșceane* in the original Slavonic text, and the town, *miasto*. However, when discussing the domain of Bârlad, the document exchanges *miasto* for *trăg*, indicating that the beneficiaries of this domain are the townspeople: “they have asked us to inquire into their older boundary, which of yore has bowed to that town of the *târg* of Bârlad” (*miastu trăgu Brăladu*). It ultimately acknowledges the “old law” (*starü zakon*), more specifically, an exemption from the small customs duty levied here. Obvious terminological differences in the text again reveal the existence of a community with a special legal status, bound to the

ruler by special privilege, and separated by other categories, as those living in the villages close to town. In 1503, Ștefan the Great donates six “stones” of wax from “our town (*miasto*) in Neamț” to the monastery by the same name. The only noteworthy element here is that the “stones” of wax (*camena*) were a duty specific to townspeople. We must not end our discussion without mentioning *miasto* in the legend on the seals of Hotin and Botoșani, suggesting that communities with a special status existed here.<sup>381</sup>

Giurescu’s claim that the education of the chancellery clerk generated the “random” use of these terms is unsupported by fact. A *logofăt* dictated the clerks the text in the document and this official, as head of the chancellery, was very well aware of the status of town communities. It is hard to believe that the use of both terms, *trăg* and *miasto*, in the same documents is the result of accident or is due to careless work. The ones drafting the official documents were familiar with the meanings of the terms describing the urban world, as demonstrated by the use of *miasto* and *mesiani* in reference to the town and the townspeople of Lviv until the 16th century included.<sup>382</sup> Research into documents where *miasto* is mentioned has led to some common elements being identified:

1. the term has to do with a type of community living in an urban settlement, considered separately from other social categories;
2. those communities have a specific standing, legal and fiscal (Suceava, Neamț);
3. the ones mentioned in the documents also include privileged groups (Bârlad), settlers (Roman), Hungarians (Hârlău).

Therefore, the term and its various forms only have legal and social meaning in the 15th century, referring only to towns and privilege-holding townspeople. In this respect, *miasto* is related to *varoș* in Wallachia.

However, *miasto* did not enter the mainstream. In the 14th century, this word indicated the place (*locus*) where settlers had moved in. Later on, as more privileges were passed, it underwent a semantic extension

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<sup>381</sup> D. Ciurea, “Sigiliile medievale ale orașelor din Moldova,” *SCȘI*, vol. VII (1956), p. 162.

<sup>382</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 294, doc. CXXXII; DH, supplement II, vol. I, pp. 205–206, doc. C-CI; p. 220, doc. CXII.

and came to indicate a town and its denizens as well. But *miasto* is only one notable exception. The original meaning of terms used to designate towns in the chancellery had first of all to do with the purpose of the settlement and not with the type of community dwelling there. Even though some townspeople saw their settlement as a *Stadt*, *Markt* or *varoș*, the name that endured was that of *târg*. Both for the chancellery, and for the rest of the country's inhabitants (mostly Romanian), the town was a place for commercial exchange. The word *grad* was also unsuccessful in designating the town, since it was associated with the notion and purpose of defence, and not that of trade. The old *târg* remained in use in Moldavia until modern times.

### *Main residences of the prince*

As part of the urbanization of Moldavia, we must also approach the towns that became the main residences of the ruler. It was no accident that these residences were located north in the 14th–15th centuries, since this was the core of the state's development, but also the place where the first rulers based the source of their power. As the tradition has it, the representatives of the Hungarian king set up residence in Baia after 1345–1347, but no later sources come to support this. However, a mention of “Dragoș's boundary” near Baia, in 1424, does hint to his possible dominion over this area.<sup>383</sup> However, no house or domain of the ruler features in documents, and not even one county had its centre here. Even so, the town was still called “the capital of the country of Moldavia” in 1467.<sup>384</sup> The legend of the seal of Baia that we cited previously also points to a similar moment, when the settlement was the main residence of the country.

For unknown reasons, the first rulers in Moldavia, those instated by the Hungarian king included, preferred to settle in Volovăț or Siret, further north. The former possibility is supported by the existence of a church and Dragoș's tomb there, as well as the special status this settlement had in the first century in Moldavia's history.<sup>385</sup> Most likely,

<sup>383</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 81, doc. 56.

<sup>384</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

<sup>385</sup> Costică Asăvoaică, “Prima reședință domnească a Țării Moldovei,” *AM*, vol. 22 (1999), pp. 117–123; Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Umbra lui Dragoș. La Putna,” *Analele Putnei*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2008), pp. 6–11.

military and political reasons (power struggles) determined Dragoş and his followers to settle here, where they had better control over the region. The area also had several residences for local boyars (those in Bădeuţi, Rădăuţi etc.), who probably collaborated initially with Dragoş. The link between Dragoş and Siret (not far from Volovăţ) is supported by local tradition, followed by the chroniclers. They credit Dragoş with the building of a residence in Siret,<sup>386</sup> while Sas, one of the successors, had supposedly built a fortalice on the neighbouring hill of Sasca.<sup>387</sup> Bogdan I also lived in this area, his tomb and that of his followers being located in nearby Rădăuţi.<sup>388</sup> Under Laţcu, the town of Siret was certainly the country's residence, since it was here that a Catholic bishopric was founded (1371), just the same as a bishopric of the same sort is erected in 1381 near the Argeş residence of the ruler of Wallachia.<sup>389</sup>

Petru I decides to move his residence further south, in Suceava. The lack of sources prevents us from finding a positive reason for this decision. Siret was a major town at that time, located on a well-travelled road. This was where colonists settled in, where a bishop's see was located, so it seemed to meet all the criteria required of an enduring residence. Some historians believe that a growth in Catholic influence is among one of the reasons. The mother of the prince herself, Margaret, was a Catholic and supported the positions of the Church in Moldavia, by the influence she had over her son. Petru had allegedly wished to avoid the Catholic entourage in Siret, so he chose a different residence.<sup>390</sup> This theory has its grounds, if we take into account Petru's negotiations with the Patriarchy in Constantinople to found an Orthodox Metropolitan Church in Moldavia.<sup>391</sup> However, we cannot take this interpretation too far, since in Suceava, right next to the ruler's palace, a towering Catholic church was built. Petru and the Catholics were probably not on such bad terms.<sup>392</sup> Petru based his decision on other reasons. During his reign, and that of his predecessor, Moldavia had made great strides east and southward, and even

<sup>386</sup> Neculce, *O samă de cuvinte*, pp. 161–162.

<sup>387</sup> Simeon Reli, *Oraşul Siret în vremuri de demult* (Cernăuţi, 1927), pp. 20–23.

<sup>388</sup> Cihodaru, "Constituirea statului," pp. 63–64, 74–75.

<sup>389</sup> Pascu, *Contribuţii documentare*, p. 66; Auner, "Episcopia catolică," p. 439.

<sup>390</sup> Matei, *Civilizaţie urbană medievală*, pp. 56–58.

<sup>391</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 174–196.

<sup>392</sup> M. D. Matei, Al. Rădulescu, Al. Artimon, "Bisericile de piatră de la Sf. Dumitru din Suceava," *SCIV*, vol. XX, no. 4 (1969), pp. 541–565.

if it was only a day's walk away from Siret, Suceava was better positioned in the country, where geography and administration were concerned. Furthermore, Siret was more vulnerable to incoming attacks from the north, from Poland. Petru wished to erect a new fortification in Suceava, which would become a true centre of power. He first selected a place north-west of the town, where he built a small stronghold (Șcheia), to overlook the road to Transylvania. Another larger stronghold was erected east of the town. At the same time, the ruler built a palace in town.

Petru also preferred Suceava since the settlement here had great potential in covering the economic needs of a palace with all its retinue and personnel, but also those of a larger garrison. Archaeological excavations had pointed out that, at that time, the settlement in Suceava went through the final motions in its urbanization. When the ruler settled here, this process was complete.<sup>393</sup> The Romanians were joined by groups of Armenians, Hungarians, Saxons, and Ruthenians. Suceava would be a citadel of the throne for Moldavia until mid 16th century. The rulers took periodic visits to other residences as well, such as those in Vaslui, Hârlău or Huși.

### *The târgs*

Moldavia also had many local *târgs* developing within its borders. As with Wallachia, the sources on them are very insubstantial or lacking in details, especially since the chancellery saw them as simple villages. Some are mentioned by foreign travellers crossing Moldavia, who noted them as stop-overs or by the fords of major rivers. Some developed in northern Moldavia, close to the border with Poland. The Kiev list mentions one fortress in Țețina.<sup>394</sup> This fortress also features in some internal documents, which place it in the land of Șepenit.<sup>395</sup> In early 15th century, it was alternatively part of Poland and Moldavia;<sup>396</sup> until the latter half of the 15th century, a county by the same

<sup>393</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 62–66.

<sup>394</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>395</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 609, doc. 166; Andronic, "Orașe moldovenesti," p. 214.

<sup>396</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 18, doc. 13; Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 625, doc. 173; p. 660, doc. 183/C; p. 706, doc. 203.

name of Țețina existing here as well.<sup>397</sup> An urban settlement probably existed in Țețina, which fell to ruin along with the fortress, or could not keep up with the competition of neighbouring Cernăuți (which became the new residence for the county).<sup>398</sup> Another local *târg* was held in Coțmani, in the same northern area of Moldavia. The name of the settlement indicates the possible presence of a Saxon community, since it is reminiscent of an institution specific to German settlers, that of administrator of the church estate, encountered in Wallachia or Transylvania as well.<sup>399</sup> Documents show it had a different status than a simple rural settlement. We suspect a small residence of the ruler existed here, which covered several villages. In 1413, Alexandru the Good donated “the village of Coțmanul Mare, and all its hamlets” to his mother-in-law, Anastasia.<sup>400</sup> After her death, the “village” and its hamlets came under the control of the bishopric in Rădăuți, which received full jurisdiction over the inhabitants.<sup>401</sup> One *târg* also existed near the see of this bishopric, in Rădăuți, a settlement which did not gain town status in the Middle Ages, a rare occurrence for a bishop’s see.<sup>402</sup> We also believe that one last *târg* in the area existed in Șepeniț, on the border of Moldavia and the Galician Rus’.<sup>403</sup>

Further south, on the road crossing the mountains and linking Baia to Bistrița, the 1408 privilege mentions the customs house at Moldovița (nowadays, the village of Vama).<sup>404</sup> Most customs houses for the ruler were located in towns, and, even though no such settlement development in Moldovița, we may assume that a small *târg* already existed here, without ever gaining urban status. Further east, on the river Prut, on the fords, other *târgs* emerged as stop-overs for the caravans crossing the waters (and this process could take up to a day), supplying the area where they existed. Most looked like a village. The *târgs* near the fords

<sup>397</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 197, doc. 143; II, p. 284, doc. 190; pp. 314–315, doc. 207–208; p. 334, doc. 220; p. 363, doc. 239.

<sup>398</sup> Burac, *Ținuturile*, pp. 80–82.

<sup>399</sup> Iorga, *Istoria poporului românesc*, p. 143; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, p. 288, doc. XXXVII; Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 130–138.

<sup>400</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 49, doc. 35.

<sup>401</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 334, doc. 220; p. 363, doc. 239; III, p. 514, doc. 289; DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 172, doc. 154.

<sup>402</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 24, doc. 17; III, p. 514, doc. 289; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 160; Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 266.

<sup>403</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 11, 20, 37; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 239–242.

<sup>404</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

and the customs houses here belonged to the ruler, and only some of them became towns:

1. Șerbanca, called “a townlet” (*miasteczko*) in the *Cronica moldo-polonă*, when the Mongols launched an attack on the Prut in 1518; we do not know its whereabouts;<sup>405</sup>
2. Tărășăuți, on the left bank of the Prut; its town status was only short-lived and only certified as such at the end of the 16th century and the first decades of the 17th century;<sup>406</sup>
3. Ștefănești, where the road from Botoșani to Soroca crossed the Prut; it becomes a town in the latter half of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th;<sup>407</sup>
4. Țuțora, close to Iași, where the road to Lăpușna and Cetatea Albă crossed; a town from the latter part of the 16th century, but with a brief existence;<sup>408</sup>
5. Târgul Săratei, a *târg* catering to the middle reaches of the Prut, vanished after 1450 and was donated to a boyar;<sup>409</sup>
6. Fălciu, further south, on the road from Bârlad to Tighina; it becomes a town after its administration is revised, creating the county of Fălciu;<sup>410</sup>
7. Reni, where the Prut joined the Danube, a town from the 16th century on.<sup>411</sup>

The future town of Galați was also a *târg* in the 15th century, despite being a simple fishing settlement; it becomes a town after 1484, when the Moldavian fortresses by the sea and the Danube are taken over by

<sup>405</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, 173, 183; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 134.

<sup>406</sup> DIR, XVII, A, II, p. 200, doc. 265; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 300–301; I. Caproșu, “Structuri fiscale și administrative într-un catastif moldovenesc de visticie din 1606,” *AIIAI*, vol. XXX (1993), pp. 269, 272; Ion Gumenăi, *Istoria ținutului Hotin. De la origini până la 1806* (Chișinău, 2002), pp. 100–101.

<sup>407</sup> DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 175, doc. 179; IV, p. 9, doc. 10; p. 239, doc. 293; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 130, 132; Gh. Pungă, “Contribuții documentare privind evoluția târgului Ștefănești (sec. XV–XVII),” *AIIAI*, vol. XV (1978), pp. 283–296; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 298–300.

<sup>408</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 393, doc. 278; II, p. 243, doc. 164; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 228, doc. 279; XVII, A, III, p. 31, doc. 49; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 517; vol. V, p. 21; Caproșu, “Structuri fiscale,” pp. 268–269, 273.

<sup>409</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 91, doc. 50.

<sup>410</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 358, doc. 324.

<sup>411</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 78, doc. 97; *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 172, 259.



the Ottomans.<sup>412</sup> Further south, on the Siret river, sources mention one small county, Olteni, which had endured ever since the area was under the rule of Wallachia.<sup>413</sup> In 1435, when the country was divided by Ilie I and Ștefan II, Olteni features as part of Ștefan's possessions.<sup>414</sup> The county is mentioned on several occasions,<sup>415</sup> but the settlement acting as its centre, most likely a *târg*, is mentioned later in 1514, as a *seliște*, an abandoned settlement.<sup>416</sup> The county is soon after merged into the county of Tecuci.<sup>417</sup>

After Cetatea Albă was taken from the Ottomans in 1484, Ștefan the Great encouraged the development of a *târg* in Cioburciu, on the lower reaches of the Dniester. A group of Hungarians settled here and remained until later times, in the 18th century.<sup>418</sup> 1528 sees a *pârcălab* certified, showing that the settlement also had a military purpose.<sup>419</sup> Around 1600, Cioburciu becomes a possession of the Mongol khans in Crimea.<sup>420</sup>

And finally, it was only in the 1500s that a series of *târgs* emerged on the inland roads, where the journey between towns lasted one day and forced the travellers to make stop-overs somewhere in the middle. The ones travelling from Iași to Vaslui were forced to cross a large forest, *Codrii Iașilor*. Since the road was not maintained, the crossing of the woods took two days, so merchants would seek respite in Scânteia, where a small *târg* that never became a town also cropped up.<sup>421</sup> On the road from Târgul Frumos to Roman and Neamț, on one ford of the Siret, stood the *târg* of Șcheia (Scheia), that would become a town in the 16th century.<sup>422</sup> It was on the Siret as well, on the bank opposite of Șcheia, that a customs house in Mogoșești is certified by docu-

<sup>412</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 235, doc. 64; p. 515, doc. 137.

<sup>413</sup> Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," pp. XXIII–XXIV.

<sup>414</sup> Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>415</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 424, doc. 239; DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 305, doc. 272; p. 463, doc. 420.

<sup>416</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 93, doc. 91; Giurescu, "Oltenii," pp. 130–132.

<sup>417</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 261–263.

<sup>418</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 22, 284–285, 508.

<sup>419</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 294, doc. 260.

<sup>420</sup> Ion Chirtoagă, *Târguri și cetăți din sud-estul Moldovei (secolul al XIV-lea—începutul secolului al XIX-lea)* (Chișinău, 2004), pp. 227–233.

<sup>421</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 117; vol. VI, p. 30.

<sup>422</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 231, doc. 283; XVII, A, IV, p. 319, doc. 398; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 139; vol. V, p. 22; Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria*, vol. II, map. 43; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 296–297.

ments.<sup>423</sup> The settlement here was never a town. It belonged to some boyars, and was then purchased by Ștefan the Great, who donated it to the monastery of Neamț.<sup>424</sup>

As part of the expansion of the land controlled by the rulers of Moldavia, many of these settlements became their possessions. Not all became towns, since rulers preferred donating them, and arresting their urbanization. The inhabitants here lost their liberty and, despite probably receiving the right to self-organize, trade or practice crafts, they did not enjoy the legal means to develop. A paradox was that, in some cases, the inhabitants of some settlements dependent of monasteries enjoyed more generous tax exemptions than those granted to the townspeople.<sup>425</sup> Despite all these, their incomes were fully or partly committed to the lord. Freedom of worship was allowed where Catholic communities existed. Being the domains of the church or the boyars, these settlements were never officially recorded as *târgs*, a designation that was the preserve of towns in the country. This explains their absence in sources. Few changed their status later on. The ones with the *târg* label still attached to them (Târgul Săratei) were named as such because the inhabitants believed their main purpose to be trading.

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Even though they received similar treatment from the prince, towns did display some substantial differences. We can draw up their typology according to several criteria. As for economic power, Baia, Siret, Suceava and Cetatea Albă were major towns in the 14th century, actively trading with Poland or the Italian colonies by the Black Sea. After 1400, Siret begins a slow decline, Suceava, Baia and Cetatea Albă hold their own, and the list is completed by Iași, Roman, Bârlad and Kilia. The hierarchy undergoes modifications after 1500, when Iași gradually becomes the most powerful economic centre in the country. As rulers saw it, the major towns were those with customs houses for incoming foreign merchandise. Suceava was the most important

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<sup>423</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 259–261.

<sup>424</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 520, doc. 293.

<sup>425</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 38, doc. 28; p. 189, doc. 134.

customs point, while Cotnari, Hârlău or Huși have no customs duties whatsoever. Even though most towns based their economy on trade, there are several differences where specialization is concerned: Cetatea Albă and Kilia were harbours and transit points for merchandise brought by sea or by land; Suceava had staple right for some categories of cloth; Cotnari, Hârlău and Huși were centres for viticulture, whereas Troțuș relied on salt mining operations.

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Our research does not rule out the presence of the Romanian element in towns. On the contrary, it is documented by sources, in the northern-Moldavian towns included. In other areas, such as Poland and Galicia, the local population was included in the process of legal and economic transformation for towns, following the Magdeburg law.<sup>426</sup> It is also possible Romanians were a part of this process. Evidence to this is the acceptance of new elements in urban organization, with the *șoltuz* and the 12 *pârgari* in all urban settlements in Moldavia. *The system was first applied to newcomers, but was later extended to all towns in the country.*

The emergence of towns in Moldavia did not follow a coherent path, but varied across the specifics of its area. Colonists played a major part in urbanization. There are several stages on the timeline of this process. In Subcarpathian settlements, German colonists (especially in Baia, Neamț) and Hungarian ones (in Piatra lui Crăciun, Bacău, Troțuș, Adjud) began arriving from Transylvania, after 1345–1347, when the area was under the control of the king of Hungary. Northern settlements (Hotin, Siret) had mostly German settlers moving in from Poland in mid 14th century, approximately. As the leadership of the country consolidated, the first rulers of Moldavia took over colonisation, encouraging the arrival of Germans and Armenians in all towns. Germans settled in Suceava, Hârlău, Cotnari and Iași, where they were joined by Hungarians, who dealt with crafts and viticulture.<sup>427</sup> Finally, other settlers arrive in Huși, Vaslui, Bârlad and, probably, Tecuci and Orhei in the first part of the 15th century. Armenians

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<sup>426</sup> Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, p. 169.

<sup>427</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 329.

settled in all towns, but they concentrated mostly in Suceava, Iași and Roman.

Settlers introduced a new way of organization, copied by the similar ones in Poland or Transylvania. The tradition of the *descălecat* for towns, urban terminology, institutions, topography, toponimy, as well as archaeological traces (ceramic) show how important colonization was for the beginnings and evolution of towns in the 14th century and in the first part of the next. We should state here that, by supporting the role of the colonists, we do not deny or downplay the contribution and the numbers of local population and institutions. Towns would have emerged in Moldavia without colonists as well, but would have probably followed a different path. We have noted some specifics for the Lower Country, which also have to do with one part of this territory later coming under the control of the Moldavian rulers. There were already several towns here, before the principality of Moldavia finished developing. Cetatea Albă and Kilia had developed on older, Byzantine foundations, and later evolved under Mongol rule, with Genovese contributions. When coming under the rule of Moldavia, the two harbours kept their autonomy. Further south, new towns emerged as well and followed the pattern of development of towns in the Upper Country, but here, the number of colonists decreases as we move from north to south and from west to east. The area between the Prut and the Dniester, more exposed to Mongol attacks, had a lower population density. In the end, these towns received the same institutional structures as the rest of the country.

However, we must ask ourselves: why did the Moldavian towns shun the path taken by their counterparts in Poland and Hungary and did not consolidate their status as “free” towns? We have found evidence to support their granting of rights according to the “German law,” and yet, they did not follow suit. We believe that the way Moldavia emerged, the policies of the rulers and the overall climate can provide an answer. The fact that urbanization overlapped the end of Moldavia’s emergence as a state had both a positive and a negative influence on the townspeople’s rights. The first rulers were interested in supporting the arrival of some colonists, skilled artisans, traders, or maybe even warriors. At the same time, but indirectly, these rulers took no further their support for the new communities. This has to do with control over the state they were about to strengthen. The state was young, and the rulers obviously had their share of challengers, even though official sources rarely mentioned them. To reinforce their

control, the rulers needed the institutions and the people that would serve their interests. This is how we may explain the presence of those grand local boyars, in Siret, Hârlău, Bârlad etc. or of judges residing in towns, who would later be replaced by other officials, more specialized. There were limits to the liberties granted to the townspeople. As everywhere in Central Europe, towns continued to rely on their lord, and in this case, the lord was the prince. Wishing to have stable sources of income or even workers in their residence, the rulers continued forcing the inhabitants to labour for them, as older customs had it. We are not aware of any communities that paid the rulers, as they did in Transylvania, duties in a single amount. By that same token, we will not find any large town councils, even though some historians tried to identify them without any just cause for their attempts.<sup>428</sup> *The rulers of Moldavia began the process of adopting the “German law” in their towns, but fell short of completing it.* All this is compounded by Moldavia’s political evolution. We believe the time between Petru’s reign and 1432 to have been one of continuous growth for towns. At that time, urbanization in Moldavia was complete, and most important centres had already been certified. The end of the long and prosperous reign of Alexandru the Good set the stage for a violent succession struggle, which took a heavy toll on Moldavia until 1457. Ștefan the Great’s rule was one of development both for Moldavia, and for the towns, where economy was concerned. The regional power that Moldavia’s ruler strived for, as well as the expansionist agenda of its neighbours periodically had negative consequence on the towns. The Hungarian attack of 1467, the two large Ottoman invasions of 1475 and 1476, the loss of its harbours in 1484, the Polish attack of 1497 and the numerous waves of Mongol attacks dramatically affected the towns of the country, which were set on fire and devastated on numerous occasions.

Towns in the Romanian Principalities are among the last to emerge in the urban landscape of Europe. Only the towns in Galicia (partly), Serbia, and Bosnia are in the same situation. This delay is not, however, longer than one century compared to towns in Poland and Hungary which mostly developed after 1241. The arrival of the Mongols hastened the urbanization process, since the kings realized they could consolidate their states only by stimulating the creation of towns economically and institutionally. In the Romanian-inhabited area,

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<sup>428</sup> See the discussion in the chapter on town administration.

Mongol domination only favoured the centres where Mongols settled (Orheiul Vechi) or that they conquered (Cetatea Albă). However, the settlements that did meet the conditions for development into towns, where petty local leaders resided, and where trade was ongoing, had difficulty emerging, since the inhabitants were overburdened by the duties collected by the Mongols. Furthermore, it is a known fact that they captured the craftsmen and moved them to their own towns, as they did in Russia.<sup>429</sup> After 1340, driven by both political (expansion) and religious (the conversion of schismatics or the heathen Lithuanians) reasons, the Christian powers began an offensive for retaking Eastern Europe. They had limited success, but they did manage to include new lands in Christendom, which gained their own political identity. Lithuania united with Poland, while Wallachia and Moldavia became buffer-states between the Christian powers of Central Europe and the new contender rising in the east, the Ottoman Empire. A more stable political climate allowed these regions to complete their urbanization. And yet, the Mongol threat still loomed in the distance. In the first part of the 15th century, the Golden Horde divided into several small khanates: the ones in Kazan, Sarai, and the one in Crimea, which would be a permanent danger for the safety of the principalities and their towns.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 338–339.

<sup>430</sup> Vernadsky, *The Mongols*, pp. 292, 329.



## CHAPTER TWO

### INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIAL, ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

#### *Administration, law, and relations with the ruler*

The organization of medieval Moldavian towns was not substantially different than that of their Wallachian counterparts. This is why we will no longer stop on the points we have made in a previous chapter, but rather go on to outline the specifics of this area, where the sources will allow us to do so. The institutional structure of towns east of the Carpathians also relied on the privilege, a document granted by the ruler which regulated his relations with the town communities. The first privileges were granted to colonists populating the settlements to be urbanized in Moldavia ever since mid 14th century. The granting of the privileges was twofold. First, such documents were passed by the king of Hungary or his representatives for settlers arriving in Baia, Siret, and probably Troțuș or Bacău as well. As they were the mainstays of royal power east of the Carpathians, the privilege-granters spared no expense of generosity when giving them rights. The privilege-granting carried on, and even intensified after the king lost his foothold here and the first Moldavian rulers took over. Petru I and Alexandru the Good were probably the ones granting the most privileges. Settlers arrived in a mostly Orthodox area, with an Orthodox rule, so the rulers had to pass documents which would acknowledge the settlers' difference in order to lure them in. Probably the same as with Poland, Hungary or even Wallachia (Câmpulung), the first leaders of the colonists were among those who had coordinated their arrival here (*locatores*). Since we lack any revealing sources, we may only assume that an evolution from the prince-elected *scultetus* to the one elected by the community occurred here as well, at least where older towns are concerned.

Rulers acknowledged personal freedom for the colonists, freedom of worship, the right to be judged by their own representatives, full control of the land within the settlement, use of the domain around the town, as well as some exemptions from taxes and customs duties.



In their destination settlements, the newcomers had the right to hold permanent market and, in some cases, a periodical weekly market, as well as a yearly fair later on. In Moldavia, there is no data on towns that had the right to a closed community, as with Câmpulung in Wallachia. We will assume that, at least in their first stages of development (the 14th–15th centuries), those settling in a town needed the consent of the community. Moldavian rulers kept a series of rights, protected by named officials, who had authority over those not part of the town community, and who oversaw the collection of taxes and the enforcement of ordinances. The ruler also preserved his right to own the town domain.<sup>1</sup>

The special status of townspeople in Wallachia is captured in the terms *varoș* and *varoșani*. In Moldavia, the term *târg* prevailed; it had an economic meaning that relied on its commercial purpose, which dominated in towns in this area. However, a special feature was that, under Polish influence, the term *miasto* was used as well, capturing the privileged situation of urban communities, as well as a possible *locatio*. East of the Carpathians, no original documents passed by the rulers for the townspeople were kept, but only incomplete fragments of them. Early documents would refer to the privilege as a “law of old,” while late ones phrase privileges by something reminiscent of their original written form: *urice de târg*.<sup>2</sup> The only solution in identifying them is a study of how town communities were organized.

The large number of settlers in Moldavian towns led Nicolae Iorga to believe that the Magdeburg law was also in force since the beginning in some towns here, such as Siret, Suceava, and Roman.<sup>3</sup> Other historians contended that sources held no evidence to support this,<sup>4</sup> and others preferred a compromise: the existence of a “law of the place,” which allegedly combined elements of local and non-local law.<sup>5</sup> Even so, there is not significant evidence for the existence of a “Romanian

<sup>1</sup> Codrescu, *Uricariul*, vol. XI, pp. 252–253.

<sup>2</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; p. 279, doc. 151. Gh. Ghibănescu, *Surete și izvoade*, vol. III (Iași, 1907), p. 169, doc. 100; p. 274, doc. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, p. 115; Iorga, *Negoțul și meșteșugurile*, p. 83; Weczerka, “Die stellung,” pp. 245–247.

<sup>4</sup> Panaitescu, “Comuncle medievale,” pp. 137–138; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 169–170.

<sup>5</sup> Earlier on, D. Ciurea agreed that the Magdeburg law was applied in Moldavian towns as well, “with several deviations from the traditional statute” (Ciurea, “Sigiliile medievale,” pp. 158–159; later, he only accepted the existence of some “elements in the life of the Polish towns” in Moldavian towns in the 15th century (Ciurea, “Noi considerații,” p. 25).

law,” which was applied in 14th–15th century towns. The elements we will henceforth present support the presence of some elements of the so-called “German law” in Moldavian towns as well, even though their origin is hard to pinpoint (Magdeburg, Nuremberg, etc).

The rich historiography on towns in areas east of the Carpathians is fraught with misconceptions on the status of settlers that resided here, and on the powers of those elected as representatives for the community. The vast presence of non-local elements in some towns was reflected in their control over the leadership and representation of the town. By not accepting the significance of such communities in older Moldavian towns, some Romanian historians attempted to explain them away. The leaders of the townspeople were supposedly “recruited among the foreign merchants and artisans in the town administration,” indicating “a token of the place that their ethnic communities of origin held in the economic life [of the town].”<sup>6</sup> First of all, ethnic communities are mistakenly taken to be “foreign.” They were only foreign when arriving and settling in Moldavian towns, but became a natural part of the town after one generation or two. In Lviv’s documents, German merchants from Suceava or Siret are not mentioned as “Germans,” but rather as “from Moldavia.” In the community, the belonging to a privileged category formed by the townspeople prevailed, while religion and ethnicity came only second. The annual election of the townspeople representatives (and not their recruiting!) was done by all the members of these communities. This election certainly observed the material status and the prestige of that person, but the weight of ethnic groups within the community also counted as well. If the Saxons were more numerous and richer, chances were the *șoltuz* would be elected among them. This also goes for where the Romanians were predominant. Where communities had similar numbers, a compromise was reached. In towns such as Bacău, Huși, Adjud and Trotuș, the leader of the townspeople was elected one year among the Hungarians, and one year among the Romanians.<sup>7</sup> Once elected, the *șoltuz* was under the obligation of equal representation for all the townspeople’s interests, regardless of his religion or his ethnicity; we have ample documentary evidence to support this. A spirit of solidarity

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<sup>6</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, p. 152; Mircea D. Matei, *Studii de istorie orășenească medievală (Moldova, sec. XIV–XVI)*, 2nd ed. (Târgoviște, 2004), pp. 64–65.

<sup>7</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 92, 132, 174.

pervaded the town community, which overstepped ethnic bounds in the Middle Ages. If they performed their duty well, some *șoltuzes* were elected several times in a row. Stan, *șoltuz* of Suceava, is noted with this office both in 1510, and in 1514.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, in more than half of Moldavia's towns, the loss of town records (to wars, pillaging, fires, the dwindling of communities for former settlers) led to an only belated certification of the *șoltuzes*, sometimes barely in the 17th century.

The names lent by sources to representatives of the town communities vary from one ethnic group to the other. The term prevailing in local documents is that of *șoltuz*, which entered via a Polish venue and is remotely related to the Latin *scultetus*. The representative of the Armenians is usually called a *voit*, a term derived from a Polish word as well, with its root in the Latin *advocatus*.<sup>9</sup> This word was also successful and found alternative use in some towns, whether in Armenian groups or among the main population.<sup>10</sup> To separate them, the documents of the time would state: “the Armenian *voit*,” “the Romanian *voit*,” or “the Romanian *șoltuz*,” etc.<sup>11</sup> Where Saxons and Hungarians were more numerous, local terms were used, showing their oral use: *Graf / Groff, Richter* and, less frequently *Greben* for Saxons;<sup>12</sup> *biró* for Hungarians.<sup>13</sup> In Latin documents, town headmen were called *iudex* and *advocatus*.<sup>14</sup>

Differences in name show that each group originally had its leader, a situation which persisted in some cases until later on. In Suceava, a document passed at the end of the 16th century mentions an Armenian *șoltuz* and a Romanian one. We might have considered the Armenian one as a simple representative of this group, but he features, as well as the other *șoltuz*, along with the 12 *pârgari* and bearing his own seal. They therefore had their own town council, with duties as precisely drawn out as the other council. Despite the differences among

<sup>8</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 204, doc. 368; p. 226, doc. 408.

<sup>9</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 320–321; Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 210–213.

<sup>10</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 203, doc. 366.

<sup>11</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4; DIR, XVII, A, II, p. 191, doc. 254.

<sup>12</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. LIV; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 78, doc. 135 and 136; p. 113, doc. 203; p. 158, doc. 239; p. 226, doc. 408; Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod (1517–1527)* (Bucharest, 1943), p. 567, doc. 120.

<sup>13</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 751, doc. 1454; Rosetti, *Serisori românești*, p. 32, doc. 5.

<sup>14</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 55, doc. XCV; p. 203, doc. 366; p. 642, doc. 1192; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 331, doc. 126; p. 365, doc. 222.

the two jurisdictions, the *șoltuzi* collaborated when issues involving the whole community surfaced.<sup>15</sup>

The precariousness of sources makes it impossible to identify a transition state in Moldavian towns, one between the arrival of the settlers and the granting of extended autonomy. In Poland or the former Russian principality of Galician Rus', the *scultetus* initially features as a representative of the main authority, only to be later superseded by the town council.<sup>16</sup> Even though both the *scultetus* and the council are recorded relatively early in Moldavia, we must not rule out the above-mentioned situation, encountered in all neighbouring areas.

The name of the *pârgari* does not vary locally, and is the same from one town to the next. Latin documents refer to them as *cives jurati*, *scabinis* or *consules*,<sup>17</sup> while German ones, as *Geschworenen Bürger* or *Purger*,<sup>18</sup> and Hungarian ones as *polgar*.<sup>19</sup> The only specific feature is the emergence of a grand *pârgar*, whose duties are not all too clear. He probably acted as a replacement for the *șoltuz*.<sup>20</sup> Until now, such first *pârgari* were identified in Baia, Botoșani, Cotnari, Neamț, Bacău, Troțuș, towns which initially had substantial colonist communities.<sup>21</sup> The *șoltuzes*, the *voits* and the 12 *pârgari* held office for one year as well. The first documented *șoltuz* is from 1421, when the *șoltuz* and the *pârgari* in Baia write to Lviv, acknowledging the granting of an inheritance by the municipality there.<sup>22</sup> A letter sent by Ulrich the *pârgar* from Suceava in 1404 has also been preserved, but the date has been questioned, and it was believed that the document was actually issued in 1504.<sup>23</sup> The *pârgari* were always twelve in number. They are mentioned as a group and,

<sup>15</sup> Rosetti, *Scrisori românești*, p. 32, doc. 5; *Documente și însemnări românești din sec. al XVI-lea*, ed. Gheorghe Chivu et al. (Bucharest, 1979), p. 188, doc. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Gieysztor, "From Forum to Civitas," pp. 23–24; Kalinowski, "City development," p. 45; Zientara, "Socio-Economic and Spatial Transformation," pp. 76–77; Kozubaska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 217–219.

<sup>17</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 55, doc. XCV; p. 203, doc. 366; p. 642, doc. 1192; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 331, doc. 126; p. 365, doc. 222.

<sup>18</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 304, doc. 39; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 113, doc. 203; p. 158, doc. 239; pp. 292–293, doc. 534–535; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti de la Ștefăniță*, p. 567, doc. 120.

<sup>19</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 751, doc. 1454.

<sup>20</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 323–324.

<sup>21</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. V, p. 72, 75; vol. VII, p. 374; Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. IV, p. 290, doc. 255; DIR, XVII, A, V, p. 364, doc. 483; Gorovei, "Note de istorie," p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. 54.

<sup>23</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 178, doc. 110.

with several exceptions, their individual name is seldom mentioned.<sup>24</sup> In some occurrences, they are collectively designated by the German *Rat* (council).<sup>25</sup>

The *șoltuz* or the *voit* and the *pârgari* council had ample authority, but it only covered the community they ruled. We disagree with Nicolae Grigoraș, when he claims that the jurisdiction of the *șoltuzes* went further than the bounds of the towns, and also touched on the villages in the county.<sup>26</sup> Outside the town, the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* only acted on specific demand by the prince (when boundaries were laid or for testimonies etc). They had legal, administrative, fiscal, and military duties. They arbitrated all matters regarding the townspeople, whether they were cases in town or on its domain. They had the right to confirm sales and purchases made by townspeople in town, based on the latter's right to hold land as inheritance within towns. They also intervened on behalf of townspeople in the commercial disputes they had with foreign merchants.

The legal duties of the *șoltuzes* did not only concern small matters. In a 1479 law, Ștefan the Great forbids his officials, as well as the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* in Siret and Suceava to judge the people of a village donated to the bishopric in Rădăuți, clearly stating the facts over which they had no authority: “that they are not to meddle in the affairs of these people of ours [...], nor are they to judge or levy reparations from them, be it for grievous deeds or petty deeds, neither for murder, nor for the kidnapping of a maiden.”<sup>27</sup> Since this ordinance is sent to several different types of officials, we may consider several jurisdictions exist in this case. The *șoltuz* intervened in murders or elopements only when they occurred within the town domain's bounds. By such documents, the ruler clearly limited the power of the *șoltuz* only to the townspeople.

To further clarify the legal authority of the *șoltuzes*, we must rely on late documents, the only ones at hand. A *șoltuz* in Troțuș presides over the case of one woman who gave birth to a child out of wedlock,

<sup>24</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 310, doc. 376; p. 368, doc. 454; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. V, p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 113, doc. 203; p. 293, doc. 535; p. 715, doc. 1314; *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 134, doc. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 338–341.

<sup>27</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 334, doc. 220.

and that of a Gypsy horse thief.<sup>28</sup> 17th century sources reveal that the *șoltuz* in Baia was invested with the power to judge serious matters as well. This right was likely a concession for the Saxons who settled here in the 14th century and was part of a vaster privilege. Bishop Marco Bandini relates that the document with this privilege still existed in the town archive and included a more special provision: the right to relieve of the death penalty for those seeking refuge in the town cemetery.<sup>29</sup> A 1660 document shows the *șoltuz* and the *pârgari* in Baia even using restraints (“we shackled him”) to look into the matter of a Gypsy accused of theft. One phrase in the document refers to an exceptional right held by the *șoltuz*, namely, passing the death penalty (*ius gladii*): “we led him to perdition, by the law of the country and how it well becomes a thief.” We do not know whether all the *șoltuzes* in Moldavia’s towns had this right. Two late documents, undated (but probably from the 17th century) reveal the *șoltuzes*, the *pârgari*, and the well-to-do in Bacău and Troțuș judging over thefts.<sup>30</sup> In these cases, a ransom for the guilty was usually sought, so the damages would be covered.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the cited texts document robberies shows that the *șoltuzes* in some towns were allowed to judge such offences, less serious than murders, but liable for capital punishment. The murderers were sent to be tried by high officials of the ruler or even the ruler himself.<sup>32</sup> Still, their power over life and death hints to an extended privilege, similar to the ones that only royal towns in Hungary and Transylvania had.<sup>33</sup> A point of interest is that the above-mentioned towns are all west of the Siret river, in the area that belonged to Hungary in mid-14th century. The privileges of communities in these settlements originated in those times. We have no data on such powers of the *județi* in Wallachia, but they must not be altogether ruled out.

Along with the officials of the ruler, the *șoltuz* and the *pârgari* saw to the safety of the town by managing the town watch, called in Romanian *strajă* or *priveghi*.<sup>34</sup> All townspeople were to take part in it, but

<sup>28</sup> DIR, XVII, A, V, p. 64, doc. 80; Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. XXIV, p. 133, doc. 119.

<sup>29</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 218.

<sup>30</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. XVI, p. 33, doc. 49; vol. XXIV, p. 133, doc. 119.

<sup>31</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, *Lege și fărâdelege în lumea românească veche* (Iași, 2006), pp. 124–125.

<sup>32</sup> *Instituții feudale*, p. 203, 299–300.

<sup>33</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 19–20; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 112–113, 251–252.

<sup>34</sup> *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 272, doc. 143.

sometimes the *șoltuzes* abused their rights and also called in people who were exempted or who depended on monasteries, leading to complaints and interventions by the prince.<sup>35</sup> Quarrels led to fines (Rom. *gloabe*).<sup>36</sup> The town authorities distributed the taxes they took from the townspeople according to wealth.<sup>37</sup> They are even mentioned levying duties. In 1458, when Ștefan the Great acknowledges the right of the monastery at Moldovița to collect wax duty in Baia, the ones supposed to exert this right also include the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* along with the *vornics*.<sup>38</sup> They were also committed to managing the town marketplace. On several occasions, the rulers ask the *șoltuzes* to let the foreign merchants sell certain products in towns or not to seize their merchandise in case they were debt-ridden. This is the case with the merchants in Brașov, who had a special standing. According to their privileges, in case of trade conflicts, they could not be tried by the *șoltuzes* or the ruler's officials, but only by the Brașov authorities. The only exception to this was when the creditor personally identified the borrower in his town.<sup>39</sup> The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* also had duties on the town domain. They carried out the public division of land for agriculture. Niccolò Barsi recounts that “when the time to sow comes, all the townsfolk go out on the field and the *șoltuz* along with the *pârgari* divide the fields, and, as many souls there are in a house, as many fields this begets them: for eight souls, eight fields.”<sup>40</sup>

The election gave the *șoltuz* the right to represent the townspeople in relations with other towns, in front of the prince or in international meetings. He often did so in person. In 1507, when the inheritance of an inhabitant in Siret is partitioned, Lviv sees the *șoltuz* Rymer and other townspeople arrive to testify.<sup>41</sup> When he had other matters to attend to, the *șoltuz* or the town council gave members of the community documents acknowledging their status. The few merchants in Moldavia receiving citizenship in Lviv had the documents to prove it, as issued by their towns of origin.<sup>42</sup> The trade relations between

<sup>35</sup> DIR, XVII, A, V, p. 44, doc. 48; p. 88, doc. 121.

<sup>36</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>37</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 23–24; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, p. 342.

<sup>38</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 108, doc. 75.

<sup>39</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 174, doc. 122; p. 179, doc. 127; p. 312, doc. 214; p. 321, doc. 221; D, I, p. 407, doc. 297.

<sup>40</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 331, doc. 126.

<sup>42</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 332, doc. 129.

Moldavian towns and those in neighbouring countries also had their share of delicate moments. Merchants, discontent with the obstacles set by the competition, often called for the *șoltuz* in their defence. In 1434, Hârlea the *șoltuz* in Bârlad threatened the merchants in Brașov with confiscating some merchandise if the matter of certain debts was not settled.<sup>43</sup> A similar dispute sees the *șoltuzes* and the *pângari* in Vaslui involved in the latter half of the 15th century. They hear the testimonies of several witnesses and exchange messages with the townspeople in Brașov to work through the trial of a tailor associated with a bowyer.<sup>44</sup> There were cases when the *șoltuzes* are themselves witnesses, and carried a lot of weight in their declarations.<sup>45</sup> In other cases, the *șoltuzes* in Moldavia were asked by their counterparts in other towns not to begin commercial reprisals.<sup>46</sup>

German sources mention the attendance of the Council in Constance (1414–1418) by some representatives of towns in Moldavia, along with the ruler's envoys. Despite the inaccuracy of the sources, some of the towns may lend themselves to identification. Moldavia had the following communities represented: Iași (*Ieszmarkt* in original), Baia (*Molga*), Bârlad (*Burlat*), Hârלאu (*Bahlo*), Cetatea Albă (*Weissenburg*) and, probably, Suceava (*Sorscha?*), Neamț (*Mencz?*), Roman (*Reinsmarkt?*) and Orhei (*Jerhe?*). The Moldavian and the Wallachian delegations arrived together to the council in 1415, accompanying Grigore Țamblac, sent by the ruler of Moldavia, the delegation of Duke Witold of Lithuania and two Greek dukes.<sup>47</sup> If we were to consider that all these towns had Catholic communities, and the council sought to discuss important issues facing the Catholic Church (the Western Schism), we believe that, among the delegates, there were also representatives of the Saxons and Catholic Hungarians, as well as *șoltuzes*, *pângari*, and members of the patriciate.

A unique document presents towns as they are only rarely featured in Moldavia, namely, along with the prince, representing the country. Above, we have cited an event in 1436, when Ilie I pledges loyalty to King Władysław III of Poland. It is not the first act of this kind by the ruler of Moldavia, but the only one where towns in the country

<sup>43</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 309, doc. 210.

<sup>44</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, II, p. 453, doc. 181.

<sup>45</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 144, doc. 186.

<sup>46</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 55, doc. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Karadja, "Delegații," pp. 69–73, 82–83.



are mentioned as well. The prince takes oath with “all our council, with knights, boyars, and nobles from fortresses, towns (*miasti*), counties [...].<sup>48</sup> The presence of towns shows that they were then believed to be a major institutional and social component in the country. The townspeople were thus acknowledged as a privileged category, between the boyars and the peasants.<sup>49</sup> This attitude is also reflected in the use of the terms *miasto* / *mistici* or in the clear separation of peasants and townspeople in the records of those owing taxes to the ruler.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, too little of the political involvement of townspeople is left in sources, as much information dates to the latter half of the 16th century and is not within the scope of this work. We will then find townspeople, especially Saxons, Hungarians, and Armenians, supporting Despot, who had risen to power after a time of persecutions for them. They would later pay dearly for their support.<sup>51</sup> In other cases, townspeople are connected with Transylvanian envoys, informing them of the affairs of the country.<sup>52</sup> Too little for two centuries of history.

Along with the *pârgari* council, some historians sought to identify a grand council in the towns of Moldavia. In a series of documents, Ioan Bogdan translated the Old Slavonic *readŭi trǎgovschih* as “the *târg* officials” (1458).<sup>53</sup> Following in Bogdan’s footsteps, Petre P. Panaitescu initially believed these “officials” to have been members of the lesser and grand council,<sup>54</sup> later on placing them in a hypothetical grand council.<sup>55</sup> He went on to further revise his opinion and state that there was a townspeople grand council, which gathered only on special occasions and elected the *județ* and the *pârgari*.<sup>56</sup> Emil Țirțosu believed we are dealing with an ancient form of leadership in the Romanian village, the elders, who did have a certain authority in legal or tax matters. In towns, this form of leadership did not disappear, as it were, but adapted by assimilating specific social categories such as the merchants. The elders were then the “local contribution” to town

<sup>48</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 697, doc. 201.

<sup>49</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 298.

<sup>50</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 4, doc. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 99, 131–132, 140–141, 266–267; vol. V, p. 25, 81.

<sup>52</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 392.

<sup>53</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. I, p. 9, doc. 6; DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>54</sup> Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale,” p. 130.

<sup>55</sup> Costăchel, Panaitescu, Cazacu, *Viața feudală*, pp. 427–428.

<sup>56</sup> Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 273.

administration, as opposed to the institution of the *judet* and the *pârgari*, introduced by settlers.<sup>57</sup> However, Constantin C. Giurescu believed a grand council did not even exist for the town, neither in Moldavia, nor in Wallachia, the only ones charged with overseeing the townspeople being the *șoltuz* and the *pârgari*.<sup>58</sup> A look into the 1458 document shows us that the reference was clearly made to “officials” (Old Slav. *readŭi*, Rom. *dregători*) in the *târg*, and not to those elected by the townspeople. In those times, the officials were the ruler’s men, the representatives of the townspeople being always elected separately from them. We will find an enlarged council (the *centumvirat*), made up of wealthy townspeople, who gathered under well outlined terms, only in Transylvanian towns from the 15th century on.<sup>59</sup>

Without gaining any institutional ground, the towns of Moldavia also form the group of “the good people,” which included, as in Wallachia, members of the urban patriciate.<sup>60</sup> Their role was important ever since the advent of towns, but mentions to them multiply only after 1500. Since they were persons of repute and authority, they feature near the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* in trials, the laying of boundaries, in letters exchanged with the leaders of other towns or as witnesses for various transactions.<sup>61</sup> A novel element is the mention made to the “young” of the town, along with the elders, who participated in investigating a matter.<sup>62</sup> An assembly of the entire town was summoned under special circumstances: during the annual election of the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*, when issues of major importance for the community were approached, when important boundaries were laid or by ordinance from the ruler. We have data on such assemblies only from the 17th century, but the assemblies probably predated this time as well.<sup>63</sup>

No mention to the election ceremony for the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* is preserved. The year 1599 has left us two documents, one from February and another from July, bearing the name of two different *șoltuzes* in Cernăuți. Even though they do not mention a certain date for the

<sup>57</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 451–452.

<sup>58</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 135–136.

<sup>59</sup> Pascu, *Voievodatul*, vol. III, p. 175; Rûsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 88–89.

<sup>60</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 349–352.

<sup>61</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 660, doc. 1223; DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 104, doc. 134; p. 174, doc. 227; p. 211, doc. 265; p. 331, doc. 402; *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 201, doc. 79.

<sup>62</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 205, doc. 261.

<sup>63</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 352–359.

election of the new town leader, we may assume this happened in springtime, during one of the many Christian events of this season.<sup>64</sup> As opposed to Wallachia, documents make several specific mentions of a meeting place for the townspeople. In Troțuș, Baia, Roman, Cotnari or Vaslui, the people requesting documents stand before the “seat” (Old Slav. *stol*, Rom. *scaun*) of the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*, a place which could have been the house of the *șoltuz* or a separate building (the town hall?)<sup>65</sup> It is unclear whether a town archive per se existed. It was only in Baia that Marco Bandini mentions something similar in the 17th century.<sup>66</sup> The role of the archive was assumed by the *catastif*, as in Wallachia, recording all the transactions or transfers of property in town. An official change came about only in the latter half of the 16th century, when Petru the Lame introduced the obligation of mentioning the inclusion of any transaction in the *catastif*.<sup>67</sup> This habit had long been in existence, as phrases in documents indicate: “and they are written in the *catastih* of the *târg*, as it is customary” or “by the custom of old, we have written in the *catastih* of the townspeople.”<sup>68</sup> In some trials over land, the rulers asked that the data inscribed in the *catastih* be checked, as it could be evidence.<sup>69</sup> The books were probably held by the *șoltuz*, but many town documents and others were kept in the main church. In Suceava, in 1461, it was asked that a property document be renewed, since the church “in the marketplace,” where the document was, had been destroyed in a fire.<sup>70</sup> There was also a town chancellery, where scribes worked, writing data into the book and writing official documents or letters as commanded by the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*.<sup>71</sup> Since he knew Latin, one Iacob *literatus* from Troțuș is mentioned as an envoy from the ruler in Transylvania in the 16th

<sup>64</sup> *Din tezaurul*, p. 81, doc. 130; p. 82, doc. 132.

<sup>65</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 293, doc. 535; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 378, doc. 469; IV, p. 238, doc. 292; Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. XVI, p. 71, doc. 103; vol. XXI, p. 109, doc. 82; vol. XXIV, p. 133, doc. 119; D. Constantinescu, “Documente moldovenești din secolele XV–XVII,” *AIIAI*, vol. VII (1970), p. 338, doc. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 218.

<sup>67</sup> Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” p. 36.

<sup>68</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 238, doc. 293; XVII, A, I, p. 61, doc. 93.

<sup>69</sup> DIR, XVII, A, V, p. 59, doc. 74.

<sup>70</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100.

<sup>71</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 319, doc. 90; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 368, doc. 454; IV, p. 238, doc. 292; XVII, A, I, p. 111, doc. 159; p. 121, doc. 175; *Din tezaurul*, p. 82, doc. 132.

century.<sup>72</sup> The fact that documents issued by the town authorities, written in Slavonic, Latin, German or Hungarian were preserved, shows that these scribes were well taught and could write both in Cyrillic and Latin. The use of German and Hungarian is indicative of the townspeople's tendency to use spoken languages in mail, and not the official ones, used in princely chancelleries.<sup>73</sup> The Lvivan archives still keep mentions of trade disputes involving townspeople from Moldavia, who brought in documents issued by the chancelleries of their towns of provenance (*littera ex officio civitatis*).<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately, the numerous wars and the destruction they brought about prevented any *catastif* in Moldavian medieval towns from being preserved. We do not even know what language they were written in.

All the towns in Moldavia had seals, granting authenticity to the documents issued by the authorities. The right to hold seals was given by the ruler when privileges were granted as well. The oldest seals have a Latin legend and belong to towns with substantial Saxon and Hungarian communities: Baia, Roman, Neamț and Cotnari. It is likely that other towns in the country had Latin seals, but they were lost and the legend was later on translated into Old Slavonic or Romanian. At least three other seals fit in this category:

1. the seal of Siret has the image of St John the Baptist, who was patron of the most important Catholic church in town;
2. the seal of Suceava has a legend suggesting a translation from Latin;
3. the seal of Troțuș, an arm holding a hammer, symbol of mining, the main occupation of the Hungarians settled there.

Emblems of the oldest seals fall into three large categories:

1. those referring to the patron of the town, religious symbols or indicative of the legendary dawn of the settlement: St John the Baptist—Siret; St Hubert's stag—Baia; St George slaying the

<sup>72</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 569, doc. 1052; p. 611, doc. 1140.

<sup>73</sup> Radu Manolescu, "Cultura orașenească în Moldova în a doua jumătate a secolului al XV-lea," in *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, ed. M. Berza (Bucharest, 1964), pp. 63–71.

<sup>74</sup> N. Iorga, *Relațiile economice ale țărilor noastre cu Lembergul*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1900), p. 25.

- dragon—Suceava; a book (the Bible?)—Huși; a cross—Lăpușna; a cross over an arrow—Hotin; a sun surrounded by fish—Bârlad;
2. with wild animals: a boar's head—Roman; a rabbit—Tecuci;
  3. domestic animals, fowl or fish: Iași—a horse; Cernăuți and Orhei—a cow; Piatra lui Crăciun—a goat; Botoșani—a peacock; Târgul Frumos—an unidentified bird (an eagle?); Vaslui and Galați: fish;
  4. symbols of occupations: Neamț, Hârlău, Cotnari: grapes and grapevines; Troțuș: an arm holding a miner's hammer; Adjud: a cramp, a pliers, and three nails.

This shows remarkable variety, and the representations of town seals can fit into the category of heraldry or emblems, but also in that of iconographic inscriptions.<sup>75</sup> Seals in the 14th–15th centuries follow the canon of European heraldry; from the 16th century on, craft and rules are not as strictly observed.<sup>76</sup>

As in Wallachia, town seals in Moldavia were round, except for the oval one in Bacău. Most were middle-sized, ranging between 3 and 4 cm, and were set in black or green wax.<sup>77</sup> Atypical ones were set in red wax, used only by the ruler. More interesting is that the exception lies with the seals of Baia and Cotnari, inhabited by close-knit Saxon communities.<sup>78</sup> Moldavia also had large seals, around 5–5.5 cm in diameter, as was the case in Baia, Cotnari, Vaslui, Neamț or the lost seal of Suceava.<sup>79</sup> This diversity in sizes led some researchers to claim there were more seals in towns, both large and small.<sup>80</sup> Since a similar situation exists in Transylvania, this theory seems to be accurate.<sup>81</sup> Seals were initially stamped, and were later applied in smoke or black ink. The only attached seal is the one in Baia, 1412, the oldest

<sup>75</sup> Ciurea, “Sigiliile medievale,” pp. 161–164; Virtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 461–482; Cernovodeanu, Mănescu, “Noile steme,” pp. 8–11, 65–74; Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” pp. 35–38, 55; Dogaru, *Din heraldica*, pp. 66–67.

<sup>76</sup> Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta*, pp. 183–184; Cernovodeanu, Mănescu, “Noile steme,” pp. 8–9.

<sup>77</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 453, doc. 181; *Documente și însemnări*, p. 188, doc. 97; Ștefan S. Gorovei, “La începuturile orașului Bacău,” *Carpica* (Bacău) vol. 18–19 (1986–1987), pp. 277–278.

<sup>78</sup> Virtosu, “Despre dreptul,” p. 340; Virtosu, “Din sigilografia,” p. 462; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XI, p. 271, doc. 3; p. 272, doc. 6.

<sup>79</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 113, doc. 203; p. 293, doc. 535; Ciurea, “Sigiliile medievale,” p. 160; Gorovei, “Note de istorie,” p. 205.

<sup>80</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Pecetea orașului,” in Emil Ioan Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 217–221.

<sup>81</sup> Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 119–120.

seal among those preserved in Moldavian towns, inviting many questions.<sup>82</sup> The presence of a severed stag head, with a crucifix between the horns, was related to Moldavia's emblem, with an auroch head and a star between the horns. According to Emil Țirtosu, the two are related and supposedly referred to the early days of both the town and the country. This same author believed that the emblem of the town of Baia was also the model for that of the country and was probably granted to the inhabitants before Moldavia emerged, probably when this land was controlled by the Hungarian king.<sup>83</sup> The emblem specific to the Catholics and the fact that a settler community arrived in Baia around 1350 support this theory.<sup>84</sup> Another seal reminiscent of the legendary beginnings of the settlement is the one in Roman. Its emblem is a boar's head and probably indicates a more or less real hunt in the area where the town emerged.<sup>85</sup> The one in Suceava, with St George slaying the dragon, is reminiscent of the patron of the oldest church in town, Mirăuți.<sup>86</sup>

We know very little about the income of *șoltuzes* and *pârgari*. They probably collected a quota of all the fines placed after trials or of the taxes levied when they issued confirmation documents for the various transactions in town.<sup>87</sup> They also held part of the income from mills, like in Baia, where the *pârgari* are noted as owners of two mills together with the monks in the Moldovița monastery.<sup>88</sup>

Modern archives have kept only two town privileges. The documents initially granted to the communities in Vaslui and Bârlad have not been preserved to this day; only the later acknowledgements by Ștefan the Great remain. Another lost document was also held by Târgul Frumos.<sup>89</sup> The above-mentioned privileges are incomplete and only focus on two matters: the town domain and tax exemptions. The acknowledgment of the townspeople privilege in Vaslui dates back to 1491, but it was only kept in later Romanian copies. The text largely

<sup>82</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. 54.

<sup>83</sup> Țirtosu, "Din sigilografia," pp. 459–460; 466–467.

<sup>84</sup> Renate Möhlenkamp, "Die ältesten Siegel Moldauischer Städte," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Ost Europas* (Wiesbaden) vol. 29, no. 3 (1981), pp. 346–352.

<sup>85</sup> Țirtosu, "Din sigilografia," p. 476.

<sup>86</sup> Gorovei, "Pecetea orașului," pp. 216–222.

<sup>87</sup> Dan, "Un document," p. 56; Bălan, *Documente bucovinene*, vol. II, pp. 163–164, doc. 87.

<sup>88</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 343, doc. 242.

<sup>89</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surele*, vol. III, p. 169, doc. 100; p. 274, doc. 159.

refers to the purchase by the prince Ștefan of 16 villages and a former village that he claims to add to the town domain, but actually only subordinates to his palace.<sup>90</sup> In a small paragraph, the ruler acknowledges the “custom of old” for the *șoltuzes*, the *pângari*, and the “paupers,” according to which those owning a dwelling in town did not pay the lesser customs duty for the merchandise they traded in Vaslui. An exception to this was fish, which was taxed by the cartload.<sup>91</sup> The privilege for the townspeople of Bârlad was confirmed by Ștefan the Great in 1494 or early 1495. The provisions in the document, with its original preserved, are not so dissimilar to those in Vaslui, but we may notice some differences. First of all, the document is issued by request from the inhabitants and their representatives. The *șoltuzes*, the *pângari*, and all the townspeople in Bârlad, as well as the “paupers” in villages on the town domain ask the ruler to reconsider the old boundary of the domain. After mapping these boundaries in detail, the ruler adds the precincts to the town domain and acknowledges for the townspeople “their old law,” as he did in Vaslui: exemption from lesser customs duty, except for the fish tax.<sup>92</sup> A careful study of these documents shows that the phrase noting exemption is identical, although the second document is an original. Alexandru the Good, who probably granted them in early 15th century, may have issued them simultaneously. The presence of the *șoltuzes* and the *pângari* shows that original privileges certainly had a legal component as well, which allowed those settled here to elect their representatives of choice. This right is no longer mentioned in Ștefan’s acknowledgement, since it had already become a component in urban organization throughout the country and could not be withdrawn. Inhabitants now placed more emphasis on the acknowledgement of the exemptions they enjoyed. Why didn’t the ruler exempt townspeople from the fish tax as well? Fish was one of the reasons that Alexandru the Good had given incentives for trade in these surroundings, on the road from Brăila to the north, via Bârlad and Vaslui. The 1408 trade privilege mentions Bârlad as the place where fish brought into the country by Polish merchants was taxed. When the townspeople of Bârlad received the right to have their own seal, they chose three fish as symbol. We believe that

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<sup>90</sup> See the discussion on the *ocoale* below.

<sup>91</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96.

<sup>92</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151.

the small fee incurred by those trading fish had motivations that were not economic, but rather symbolic. It reminded the townspeople that, despite all their liberties, they were still dependent on the ruler, who granted them their rights.

The two privileges mention the law (Old Slav. *zakon*) or the custom (Old Slav. *obiciai*) of old. The “custom” is also mentioned when renewing the privilege granted to Polish merchants in 1456 by Petru Aron. Foreign merchants were allowed to have a dwelling in Suceava, provided they observed the “custom of the *târg*,” as did the other townspeople.<sup>93</sup> One future document mentions the “law of the fortress of Hotin” in 1604. Even though it does mention the fortress at Hotin, and not the town (the document is passed by the *pârcălab*), the fact that a law is specifically mentioned shows that a special status existed there.<sup>94</sup> These phrases prove there was a *law* specific to the towns of Moldavia. The inhabitants and the ruler were familiar with it and took it into account. The system of organization in towns proves that this law definitely had elements of “German law,” with a *şoltuz*, the *pârgari* council, the right to trial, to full ownership over lands in town, Latin seal, exemptions etc. Further arguments are provided by the hints regarding the *locatio civitas* in Baia, Roman or Siret. The law was initially applied to groups of settlers, and was later extended to include the rest of the population in those settlements. There are however limits to the introduction of this new order, which have to do with how Moldavia evolved along its political and economic lines. Rulers of Moldavia encouraged the development of towns, but did not forget to press them for even more taxes and even labour. Furthermore, we have no data confirming that duties were added to a single amount. Even though they accepted a different organization compared to the law of the country, the process of adopting the “German law” was not completed. Towns in Moldavia could not extend their autonomy.

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<sup>93</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte*, vol. II, p. 788, doc. 231.

<sup>94</sup> DIR, XVII, A, I, p. 140, doc. 202.



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By the phrase “our *târgs*,” the rulers show that they viewed towns as their own domains, a not uncommon occurrence.<sup>95</sup> The power of those elected by the townspeople was everywhere backed up by that of officials named by the ruler. In the 15th century, as the *șoltuzes* and the *voits* appear, we will find judges in several old Moldavian towns. In 1434, the *șoltuz* in Bârlad wrote to Brașov in reference to a matter tried by the judges in Bârlad.<sup>96</sup> One year later, Ștefan II requested the judges in Bacău and Trotuș not to hinder passing Brașovian merchants in their movements.<sup>97</sup> Several years later, Petru II asked the judges in Iași and Hârlău not to judge or fine the people of the monastery at Probota (1448).<sup>98</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu believed that these judges were nothing more than officials for the ruler, with right to hold trial, and that they resided in a county centre, while Nicolae Grigoraș believed that, along with the *șoltuzes*, they acted as judges in the town.<sup>99</sup> In 1458, judges are placed first in a series of officials, who are asked to not hold trial and not collect taxes in several villages of the Metropolitan Church in Roman.<sup>100</sup> A similar situation is presented by the judges in Dorohoi and Bacău.<sup>101</sup> The above-mentioned judges are therefore the ruler’s people, usually with legal and tax duties targeted at social categories other than the townspeople. At most, they ensured that the townspeople fulfilled some obligations towards the ruling power. They cannot be mistaken for the elected in the town, nor for other ruler’s officials (the *vornics*), since we will find both mentioned in the same document.<sup>102</sup> Their jurisdiction was county-wide and they resided in towns specifically because they were county centres. However, they are not present in all towns. A document regarding the Hungarians in the village of Lucăcești mentions judges in Bacău, and not in Roman, as we would have expected, said village being only several kilometres

<sup>95</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, I, p. 343, doc. 242; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, pp. 360–363.

<sup>96</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 309, doc. 210.

<sup>97</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 195, doc. 141.

<sup>98</sup> DRH, A, I, pp. 392–393, doc. 277–278.

<sup>99</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 143–144; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, p. 322.

<sup>100</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>101</sup> DRH, A, II, pp. 118–119, doc. 83–84.

<sup>102</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 309, doc. 210; II, p. 79, doc. 55; p. 103, doc. 70.

away from Roman.<sup>103</sup> It is likely that some towns did not have such officials, probably those with substantial Saxon or Hungarian communities. Except for Roman, they do not feature in Baia either. They are less and less mentioned after 1450, and are replaced by new officials. They were the passage to more specialized agents, both on a county level (the *pârcălabi*, and the county *staroste*), and on a town level (*vornic*), coexisting with them for a while. In 1466, Ștefan the Great grants an exemption for serfs and asks the *pârcălabi* of Neamț, the county *staroste* and other lesser officials not to try them. The same ruler forbids in 1479 the boyars and the *starostes*, the *șoltuzes*, the *pângari* and the *vornics* in two towns to judge the serfs of Rădăuți.<sup>104</sup> Judges are no longer mentioned.

The name of judges and their associated office indicate an existence that predates their date of certification. Marketplace judges (*iudex fori*) can be found in Poland's commercial settlements before the German settlers took residence here and before the Magdeburg law was adopted. They had legal, administrative and tax duties and were subordinated to the local dukes, and not to inhabitants.<sup>105</sup> The *târgs* in Moldavia before the country was created certainly had some officials, who acted as judges on behalf of the local ruler. We will conjecture that there was a connection between these officials and the judges in 15th century Moldavia.

Another connection must be drawn between judges and the presence of grand boyars in towns in the first internal documents of the country. Those boyars feature as witnesses in various documents passed by the rulers. Their office is not mentioned, but only their association with a town: Bârlă from Hârlău (1384, 1398), Roman and Vlad from Siret (1399, 1407), Șandru from Hotin (1401), Șandru and Dragoș from Neamț (1403, 1407), Negru from Bârlad (1401), Mihail from Dorohoi (1397, 1407) or Șerbea from Vaslui (1423).<sup>106</sup> They are either members of the families of former local rulers or officials appointed by the ruler. The two alternatives are not exclusive of each other. As the

<sup>103</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 119, doc. 94.

<sup>104</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 189, doc. 134; p. 334, doc. 220.

<sup>105</sup> Alexander Gieysztor supported this theory in several studies: Gieysztor, "Les origines de la ville slaves," pp. 298–301; Gieysztor, "From Forum to Civitas," pp. 17–19; Gieysztor, "Les chartes de franchises urbaines," pp. 105–107.

<sup>106</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 601, doc. 163; p. 628, doc. 175; DRH, A, I, p. 7, doc. 6; p. 11, doc. 9; p. 19, doc. 13; p. 24, doc. 17; p. 30, doc. 22; p. 69, doc. 48; p. 79, doc. 54.

Moldavian princes extended their dominion, they subjected local centres, some in a pre-urban phase, and others, simple villages. Trusted men became leaders of the newly-created counties, but we cannot know who among them was part of local boyar families and who of the ruler's inner circle.<sup>107</sup> These boyars are noted in settlements that were county centres, so they had county-wide authority as well. At that point, some of these settlements already acted as towns (Siret), while others already had fortresses (Hotin, Neamţ) or residences (probably Dorohoi, Vaslui), indicating they had performed specific tasks in these areas, such as trying, collecting taxes, gathering an army etc. In Siret, they are no longer mentioned after the town income is donated to the former wife of Alexandru the Good. Some of them receive note in documents before coming into office. Bârlă is witness in a document issued in 1384, but he is only noted as a boyar in Hârlău in 1398.<sup>108</sup> The same with Mihail from Dorohoi, noted ever since 1397, and only associated with the town of Dorohoi from 1407 on.<sup>109</sup> We cannot see them as owners of these settlements, since they belonged to the ruling authority. Since some of these grand boyars were associated with these towns, we may assume they had received their office as a reward for their services.

The highest official appointed by the prince in towns is the *vornic*, also referred to as a *vornic de târg*. The *vornic* originally looked after the residence and the household of the ruler. Since the end of the 14th century, we may identify such larger or smaller residences, true centres of local power, in the following towns: Roman, Suceava, Hârlău, Iaşi, Vaslui, Bacău, Pietra lui Crăciun, Târgul Frumos, Dorohoi, Bârlad, Huşi, and probably Neamţ as well. Botoşani is added to this list, with a ruling lady's residence certified in the 17th century, but which existed since the previous century, at least. To better run the country, the rulers made regular visits to their counties, held trial, supervised the army or regulated local issues. When the prince was absent, a *vornic* represented him in towns. He had far-reaching duties: legal, administrative, military and tax-related. He could not hold trial over the townspeople, unless they were involved in matters exceeding the jurisdiction of the *şoltuz*. Instead, he had the right to call them to arms and to coerce

<sup>107</sup> See also Gorovei, "Istoria în palimpsest," pp. 170–171.

<sup>108</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1; p. 7, doc. 6.

<sup>109</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte*, vol. II, p. 628, doc. 175; DRH, A, I, p. 7, doc. 5; p. 69, doc. 48.

them into fulfilling what was required of them. He also had duties in the town marketplace. He levied customs duties, presided over disputes and proven thefts and dealt with those not included in the townspeople community: serfs, ruler's slaves etc.<sup>110</sup> The *vornic's* tasks also extended to town domains and villages depending on the ruler, and he had lesser public workers with tax duties subordinated to him.<sup>111</sup> The first *vornic* in a town is mentioned in Roman, in 1403.<sup>112</sup> The most important was the one in Suceava, where the main residence of the ruler stood. He was part of the ruler's council and was mentioned as a witness in various documents.<sup>113</sup>

From the 15th century on, another official appointed by the ruler features in documents: the *ureadnic*. Petre P. Panaitescu saw him as a replacement for the *vornic*, while Constantin C. Giurescu and Nicolae Grigoraș believe they are one and the same, the *ureadnic* being only another term for the obsolete *vornic*.<sup>114</sup> An analysis of documents shows no notable difference between the duties of the *vornic* and those of the *ureadnic*, and some alternate the two terms along their content.<sup>115</sup> Generically, the name *ureadnic* does mean "official," and this is why officials bearing this name are noted in monasteries or in other situations than those involving towns.<sup>116</sup> Where urban settlements are concerned, the transfer from *vornic* to *ureadnic* was carried out as some of the older princely residences were discarded.

The duties townspeople had towards the ruler afford categorization, as they did in Wallachia:

1. direct taxes, originating in taxes placed on persons and buildings, compounded by duties on products obtained on the town domain;
2. trade-related taxes (customs duties for selling products in the marketplace);
3. work in strongholds, mills, town watch etc;
4. military duties.

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<sup>110</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 179, doc. 127; p. 312, doc. 214; II, p. 334, doc. 220; D, I, p. 407, doc. 297; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 247.

<sup>111</sup> Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 366–369.

<sup>112</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 24, doc. 17.

<sup>113</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 25, doc. 18; pp. 30–34, doc. 22–24.

<sup>114</sup> Costăchel, Panaitescu, Cazacu, *Viața feudală*, pp. 426–427; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 139–142; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 366–367.

<sup>115</sup> DIR, XVII, A, IV, p. 222, doc. 283; p. 245, doc. 306.

<sup>116</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 352, doc. 249; p. 377, doc. 266; II, p. 6, doc. 5; p. 61, doc. 44; III, p. 503, doc. 283.

Sources relate no actual information on how urban communities in Moldavia paid duties added into a lump sum. All proportions kept, there is one clue that prompts us to point out a resemblance between the main tax inhabitants owed the Moldavian ruler (Old Slav. *dan*, Rom. *darea domnească*) and the tax paid by the townspeople to the king in Hungary or Poland.<sup>117</sup> We have already mentioned the 1421 document whereby Alexandru the Good transfers the income of the town of Siret to his former wife. There are two versions to this document, one Slavonic, and the other Latin, and the phrase “payments from duties” in Slavonic is translated as *census* in Latin.<sup>118</sup> A compelling fact is that this last word was used in Hungarian and Polish towns in reference to a fixed annual fee paid by inhabitants for the town land, which the judge allotted in proportions.<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately, this term is not mentioned in other Moldavian sources for a very simple reason: there are few Latin texts documenting town organization. In some of them, the duty paid to the ruler is even double (“large” and “lesser”), but we know nothing of its amount.<sup>120</sup> It probably had its counterpart in the town tax (*bir*) paid in Wallachia.<sup>121</sup> The money collected from it were sent to the treasury by the *șoltuz*.<sup>122</sup> The owners of taverns were forced to pay a wax duty known as a *camena*.<sup>123</sup> Such taxes on alcoholic drinks sold in towns were collected in other countries as well, such as Poland.<sup>124</sup> On several occasions, the *camena* is also associated with other buildings in town, leading some historians to claim that it was levied for all buildings, including houses, stores or workshops.<sup>125</sup> In one instance, the *camena* is also exacted from foreign merchants, although without explaining the object of taxing (probably wax as a trade good).<sup>126</sup> The term *camena* is Slavonic and means “rock.” In

<sup>117</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 10, doc. 9; p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>118</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, p. 779, doc. 230.

<sup>119</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 251–252; Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, p. 155; Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, p. 214.

<sup>120</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 10, doc. 9; p. 94, doc. 64; DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 278, doc. 244.

<sup>121</sup> *Instituții feudale*, p. 42.

<sup>122</sup> Caproșu, “Structuri fiscale,” p. 260.

<sup>123</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288.

<sup>124</sup> Jan Rutkowski, *Histoire économique de la Pologne avant les partages* (Paris, 1927), p. 41.

<sup>125</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 392, doc. 276; II, p. 10, doc. 9; p. 94, doc. 64; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 158.

<sup>126</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 94, doc. 65.

Poland, we will find it as a unit of measurement for weight (*kamień*), and it was used to weigh products such as wax, tallow, pepper, etc. It amounted to 30 or 32 pounds, a little over 12 kilograms at that time.<sup>127</sup> In Moldavia, its meaning had branched out to mean a weight unit for wax and wax duty. By collecting this tax, the ruler ensured a significant source of income. Wax was one of the valuable products in the Middle Ages, and it was sold for use in lighting, in dwellings, or for ceremonies in churches. Wax was taxed in Wallachia as well, but it did not have the same significance as it did in Moldavia.<sup>128</sup>

Other income reached the treasury via taxes from trade. These taxes were generally referred to as a customs duty (Lat. *theloneum*, Old Slav. *mîto*, Rom. *vamă*) and were of two kinds: the greater customs duty and the lesser one. Border customs duties were added to it. There are several perspectives on the difference between the greater and the lesser customs duty. Giurescu believes that the first was collected off goods brought from outside the country, and the other applied to local products sold in the country.<sup>129</sup> Other authors believe that the distinction was made between types of customs taxes according to the value of goods and the tax quota. As a special duty, the greater customs tax was supposedly levied only in Suceava, the residence of the ruler, while the lesser tax was levied in Suceava and in other towns in the country.<sup>130</sup> Still, the two are not documented only in Suceava. They are also noted by a 1460 document in Bacău, stating that the greater tax was paid in *grivne*, silver coins, by tradespersons storing their goods in town, while transiting merchandise were only taxed “by the cartload, as required.” The document also mentions the “count,” probably that of livestock taxed when passing through town.<sup>131</sup> There was therefore a difference between goods that were to be sold in the marketplace of one town and those only passing through it. The lesser tax probably covered the last type of merchandise as well.

The first mention of a customs duty dates back to 1384, when Petru I donates the income from the customs house in Siret to the Dominican church.<sup>132</sup> It features as a *libra* in the Latin text, which may be

<sup>127</sup> Rutkowski, *Histoire économique*, p. 40; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 157; St. Hoszowski, *Les prix à Lwow (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris, 1954), p. 36.

<sup>128</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 228, doc. 135; DIR, XVI, B, V, p. 376, doc. 394.

<sup>129</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 159.

<sup>130</sup> *Instituții feudale*, p. 491.

<sup>131</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 133, doc. 93.

<sup>132</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

translated by “scales,” and which could be associated with the regular tax and the related measuring tool.<sup>133</sup> Alexandru the Good’s 1408 privilege provides us with other valuable details, revealing that the customs system was well structured. The main customs point was in Suceava, a town that receives staple right for the cloth brought by Polish merchants. There were also secondary customs points in: Hotin, Cernăuți, Siret, Dorohoi, Iași, Tighina, Cetatea Albă, Moldovița, Baia, Bacău, Troțuș, Roman, Neamț, Bârlad. The privilege makes specific reference to the “scales,” which is here referred to by the Slavonic *kantari* and seen as a unit of measurement.<sup>134</sup> There are other customs houses in the towns of Adjud, Târgul Frumos, Vaslui or Lăpușna, but also by the fords of the main rivers (Vadul Călugăresc, Vadul Țuțorei) or in local *târș* that had not reached urban status (Mogoșești, Jicov).<sup>135</sup> Two towns had special status where tax levying was concerned. In different times, Siret and Botoșani became appanages for the consorts of princes. Siret was only a temporary preserve in this respect, and was transferred in compensation for divorce from the former consort of Alexandru the Good, Rimgaila, while Botoșani was a permanent one. The consorts cashed in the income the ruler would have normally collected, the communities here largely holding the same rights as the others in the country.<sup>136</sup>

Wishing to endow the monasteries they had built, the rulers donated to them some of the income collected in towns. In 1422, Alexandru the Good donated to the monastery in Bistrița the Bârlad customs duty, with the same monastery receiving income from the Bacău customs house in 1439.<sup>137</sup> One part of the customs taxes were leased by the prince to boyars and grand merchants, who paid a yearly amount in kind.<sup>138</sup> There were also Armenians who lease the customs tax, and even Ragusans later on.<sup>139</sup> There are cases when the ruler relinquishes

<sup>133</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii. Metrologia medievală pe teritoriul României* (Bucharest, 1971), p. 272.

<sup>134</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>135</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207; A, II, p. 57, doc. 41; III, p. 62, doc. 36 and p. 507, doc. 285.

<sup>136</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 160; Sorin Ifțimi, “Apanaje și surse de venit ale Doamnelor din Moldova și Țara Românească,” *AIIAI*, vol. 42 (2005), pp. 1–15.

<sup>137</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 75, doc. 51; p. 283, doc. 200.

<sup>138</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 371, doc. 262; II, p. 4, doc. 4.

<sup>139</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 552, doc. 1015; *Documente și însemnări*, pp. 167–168, doc. 75–76.

taxing rights on towns for the benefit of monasteries: Alexandru the Good leaves the wax stones in Bacău to the monastery at Bistrița (a 1457 acknowledgement); Ștefan II does the same with the wax collected in Baia, left to the same monastery (a 1458 acknowledgement); Petru II donates to the monastery at Proboata the wax from the taverns in Târgul Frumos (1448); Ștefan the Great donates the wax from Siret to the monastery in Putna (1488) etc.<sup>140</sup> Townspeople are only rarely exempted from customs duties individually. Ion the Armenian, from Suceava, receives a tax exemption in 1449 for purchases made in the country, but this may have been granted because he had donated a house in town to the monastery at Moldovița.<sup>141</sup> A similar case is recorded in 1451, when an Armenian woman donates her houses in town to the same monastery.<sup>142</sup> However, priests, monks or even monastery villages were lavished with such exemptions.<sup>143</sup>

We know only little of the labour duty for fortresses or mills belonging to the prince. No 14th–15th century document with a direct mention to these duties has been preserved. Town inhabitants were to help with reinforcing the fortifications in strongholds near towns (Suceava, Neamț, Hotin, Soroca) or the defensive works around them (Suceava or Baia). Where no strongholds existed, the ruler had palaces or houses, fortified as well. Townspeople were interested in having these fortresses well attended to, since their fate or that of the goods they took there in times of danger was often decided by them. Fortress labour is not an obligation specific only to the Romanian Principalities. The Transylvanian Saxons were asked to work on strongholds, as a 1370 document tells us, exempting them from working on a fortalice that the ruler was erecting near Turnu Roșu.<sup>144</sup> The former Galician Rus' also has settlements adopting "German Law," which preserve certain labour obligations towards the king or his officials, obligations which have to do with old local customs.<sup>145</sup>

No texts documenting the obligation of townspeople to transport goods for the ruler are kept in Moldavia. Some do mention this duty,

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<sup>140</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288; II, p. 94, doc. 65; p. 108, doc. 75; III, p. 62, doc. 36.

<sup>141</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 9, doc. 7; p. 60, doc. 43.

<sup>142</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 10, doc. 9; p. 94, doc. 64.

<sup>143</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 371, doc. 262; p. 393, doc. 278; II, p. 38, doc. 28; p. 103, doc. 70; DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 278, doc. 244.

<sup>144</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 154, doc. 118.

<sup>145</sup> Kozubska-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 188–191.



but they refer to serfs settled near towns or the peasants in the villages of the ruler.<sup>146</sup> The townspeople were probably exempted, since most of them were merchants and were already involved in this. Ultimately, like other inhabitants of the country, the townspeople had to take arms when required.<sup>147</sup>

*The town domain*

Moldavian towns had their own domain, that the townspeople used for agriculture. Slavonic or Romanian documents mention the domain as a *hotar* or a *țarină*.<sup>148</sup> While they had full ownership over plots of land in town, being able to sell, buy or hand them down to their inheritors, lands in the town domain were only provided to the townspeople with a right to use. The domain was seen as a property of the ruler, and those using it had to pay something in return.<sup>149</sup> This may be explained by the way many towns emerged, through colonisation, the newcomers settling on lands belonging to the ruler. To convince them to come, but for economic and fiscal reasons as well, the ruler allowed the inhabitants to own the lands in town. Since the settlers dealt in trade and crafts, and not agriculture, the land around the settlement was left to the townspeople only for safekeeping. They were required to pay duties for agricultural products gained off this land just like any other inhabitant. There are cases when, legally or not, the townspeople attempted to sidestep this type of ownership. In 1455, one document mentions the townspeople of Neamț attempting to sell one land off the domain. The ruler intervened, took hold of the land and donated it to a monastery, threatening townspeople that, if they went to trial over it, they would have to pay a staggering 100 silver roubles.<sup>150</sup> This attempt to sell part of the domain is highly unusual, since they knew the status of these lands, which they could only use. One possibility is that, in the case of the Saxons in Neamț, the initial privilege was more extended than in other towns, and the ruler later stepped in to bring it on a par with that of other urban centres in the country.

<sup>146</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 143, doc. 189; XVII, I, p. 191, doc. 272–273.

<sup>147</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, p. 79, doc. 97.

<sup>148</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 407, doc. 285; II, p. 38, doc. 28; p. 232, doc. 157.

<sup>149</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 38, doc. 28.

<sup>150</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 62, doc. 45.

The townspeople, as well as the boyars, the monasteries, and the prince could obtain plots in town. The townspeople did not gain the right to forbid access to land for other categories, and this took a toll on the cohesion of the community. The boyars and, above all, the monasteries often acted against the townspeople's best interests, since they were part of another jurisdiction or were the receptacles of the generous exemptions granted by the ruler. The boyars and the Church began working their way into urban domains, but this occurrence is not specific only to Moldavia. It was in Poland as well that nobles began acquiring ever more land in towns, especially from the 16th century on. In Kraków, in 1580, only 46% of the land within the walls was still owned by the townspeople; nobles had 18%, while the Church, 35%. Except for large towns, neither the domains of Polish towns were under complete ownership of the townspeople. Most had right to use over land, paying money for it or being forced to offer services to the owner (the king, the Church or the grand nobles).<sup>151</sup>

Of all the duties collected by the ruler in Moldavia for land worked on the town domain, one stands out: the wine tax (*deseatîna din vin*). Inhabitants of many towns grew vineyards, wine sales bringing considerable income. Several times, the rulers donated the wine from townspeople to some monasteries that used it in their ceremonies or even sold it in their own taverns. This is what Petru II does in 1448 with the wine owed to him in Hârleu and Cotnari.<sup>152</sup> Ownership of vineyards is unique in Moldavia as well. Since special tools, as well as major investments were required by vineyards, the townspeople could fully own grapevines, which could be sold or passed on to one's inheritors. The land where the vineyard was remained the property of the initial owner, of the ruling authority or, later on, the monasteries.<sup>153</sup>

This applied to numerous mills and ponds on town domains. The right to hold mills was the sole preserve of the monarch, so, in time, the rulers granted mills or mill fords both to the townspeople, and to monasteries or boyars. There are even cases when townspeople and monasteries were in conjoined use of the same mills.<sup>154</sup>

Except for Bârlad, we do not know the full extent of town domains. Many documents note these domains, but only when presenting the

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<sup>151</sup> Bogucka, "Limited Urban," pp. 168–172.

<sup>152</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288; II, p. 1, doc. 2.

<sup>153</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 146.

<sup>154</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 343, doc. 242.

boundaries of nearby villages. The first such boundary is that of the town of Baia (1424), and those of other towns are mentioned then as well.<sup>155</sup> The only detailed account of the extent of one domain is that in Bârlad, owing to Ștefan the Great looking into matters at hand here before 1495. The landmarks for the domain edges, presented in the privilege acknowledgement, show it to have been relatively large, with a diameter ranging between 10 and 18 km.<sup>156</sup>

Town domains in Moldavia had few, if any, villages. When Alexandru the Good transfers his rights to his former wife in Siret, he also mentions the villages that relied on this town, without naming them. Bârlad is similar; in it, “paupers in all villages obeying that town” are mentioned, but no village name is noted.<sup>157</sup> From the 16th century on, the rulers begin donating boyars and monasteries more and more parts from town domains (in Tecuci, Dorohoi, Roman, Botoșani etc).<sup>158</sup>

The so-called *ocol* had special status in Moldavia. The initial meaning of the word in Slavonic was of “surrounding land,” or land subordinated to a certain location, noted ever since 1392.<sup>159</sup> In documents, the *ocol* is one group of villages almost always attached to a town, which was in fact dependent on the residence and household of a ruler in that town. Villagers worked to provide for the needs of that household. The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* had no authority over these people. The fact that the *ocol* is also sometimes termed a *hotar* leads to it being mistaken for the town domain.<sup>160</sup> The 16 villages noted in the privilege of Vaslui were actually added to the *ocol* of the palace in Vaslui and not to the town domain.<sup>161</sup> There are however documents phrasing these situations specifically as “villages in the *ocol* of our residence,” revealing their special status, subordinated to the *vornic*.<sup>162</sup> The theory that the *ocol* is not directly associated with the town, but with the prince’s residence, is also reinforced by the presence of such clusters of

<sup>155</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 80, doc. 55.

<sup>156</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 65; DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151.

<sup>157</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48.

<sup>158</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 52, doc. 48; p. 197, doc. 174; III, p. 104, doc. 133; p. 224, doc. 276.

<sup>159</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.

<sup>160</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 305, doc. 202.

<sup>161</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96. Details in C. Cihodaru, “Refacerea ocoalelor cetăților și curșilor domnești în a doua jumătate a secolului al XV-lea,” in *Omăgiu lui P. Constantinescu-Iași, cu prilejul împlinirii a 70 de ani*, ed. Emil Condurachi (Bucharest, 1965), pp. 267–272.

<sup>162</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 185, doc. 93.

villages near fortresses (the Neamț stronghold) or small houses of the ruler in villages (Bădeuți).<sup>163</sup> Despite not being legally subordinated to the town, the *ocol* may be seen as falling within its economic scope of influence. When the boundaries of an *ocol* were laid, the rulers always chose villages near towns.

The county, as an administrative unit, was not necessarily the hinterland of one sole town, since there are counties such as Hârlău or Suceava, which usually have more towns. There are four towns between Târgul Frumos and Botoșani, spread on a 100 km road. Cotnari and Hârlău were only 10 km away from each other, so their hinterland was much smaller, unlike that of towns east of the Prut, where urban density was low because of Mongol attacks. In Moldavia, the land supplying or being supplied by towns did not exceed a circle with 20–25 km in radius, much larger than that covered by Polish towns.<sup>164</sup> Small local *târgs* covered the demand of areas too remote from towns, especially where it took more than a day's walk to get from one town to the other (e.g. Scânteia, emerged between Iași and Vaslui).

#### *Social and ethnic structures*

Even though townspeople were legally a single category, that of free people holding privileges, town society was a complex one. There were levels of economic power separating the rich from the poor. The patriciate of towns in Moldavia was made up of high-ranking community members: the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*, as well as the merchants and craftsmen doing business with towns outside the country or the ruler. The phrase “the good people” (Old Slav. *dobrii liudi*) refers to the members of this elite urban group. They are first mentioned in 1449, when they step in to reconcile a minter with a *pârcălab*; there are also names, among them two *voits* and one customs official.<sup>165</sup> The Lviv claim of the legacy of grand merchant Nicolae Brânză from Siret in 1507 shows us that he had a large amount of money (*floreți tartaricales, aspre antique, denari, grossis valachicis* etc), silverware and a stone house

<sup>163</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 225, doc. 278; IV, p. 59, doc. 76; Aurel V. Sava, “Târguri, ocoale domnești și vornici în Moldova,” *Buletin Științific. Secțiunea de științe istorice, filosofice și economico-juridice* (Bucharest) vol. IV, no. 1–2 (1952), pp. 77–87.

<sup>164</sup> Janeczek, “Town and Country,” pp. 163–168.

<sup>165</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4.

in Lviv, along with the goods in his town of origin. A further argument to back up the status of this merchant is that the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* from Suceava were among the witnesses present when the claim was made.<sup>166</sup> The value of the goods these grand merchants sold reveals their economic strength. Some of them worked with very large amounts, like the merchants in Baia. In 1529–1530, two merchants here brought products worth over 100,000 asprons to Brașov, an amount well over half of the value of goods brought in those years across the mountains by all merchants in Moldavian towns.<sup>167</sup> Caloian or Gheorghe and Dumitru Vallata, all from Cetatea Albă, Cocea and Sahac from Suceava, Nicolae Brânză from Siret, sold, purchased and sold merchandise by credit, merchandise worth hundreds of florins.<sup>168</sup> Those living in harbours by the sea even had their own ships (*mercatores transmarini Walachie*).<sup>169</sup>

Archaeological research has shown that the rich in Moldavian towns lived in houses with cellars, which used brick stoves or, from the 15th century on, with tiles. Such houses were found in Suceava and Baia.<sup>170</sup> With the large amounts of money they held, patricians begin purchasing domains outside the town, especially from the 16th century on. Still, until the 17th century, the townspeople do not display a tendency to enter the ranks of the boyars or to seek their protection.<sup>171</sup> The townspeople were aware of belonging to a separate group, and took pride in their status and position, both social, and economic.<sup>172</sup>

In the 15th century, well-to-do townspeople sent their children to study in Poland, especially at the university created by King Casimir III in Kraków, in 1364. The annual of students graduated here includes ever since 1405 the names of students from Baia, Bacău, Suceava, Roman, Troțuș, Hârlău, Iași and Siret. Most names are German: Mathias Filczkopoter, Simon Johannis Vikerle, Laurencius Andree *Burger*, Emeric, along with names that have a local ring to it,

<sup>166</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>167</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 264.

<sup>168</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 30–31; N. Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, pp. 313–316, doc. 72–82; p. 331, doc. 126.

<sup>169</sup> Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” p. 95.

<sup>170</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 94–97.

<sup>171</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 238, doc. 292.

<sup>172</sup> Details in Gorovei, “Cu privire la patriciatul,” pp. 256–257.

like Michael Stephan, Michael Thoma etc.<sup>173</sup> There are also Moldavian students in Prague and Vienna. Jacob “de Moldanie” (1402) and Jacob “de Molda” (1410) study in Prague, the latter probably arriving from Baia. Vienna has Ladislaus Blasy (1441) and Laurencius (1448), both from Baia as well. In Prague and Vienna, some of the young students have the *pauper* label attached, since they were of modest means.<sup>174</sup> Sons of the grand boyars also studied here.

Special relations were entertained between members of the urban elite in Moldavia and the patriciate in Poland, especially in Lviv. In 1421, we will learn that Nicolas Hecht from Baia had decided ever since 1400 to leave to Lviv by will the debts he had to recover from one merchant in this town. Hecht was very rich, since he had significant debt to cash in, in gold marks.<sup>175</sup> This is what a townsman of Siret does, leaving his goods from Lviv for “acts of charity” (1507).<sup>176</sup> Many merchants in Moldavia, especially German, are noted in the records in Lviv and Kraków with right to citizenship.<sup>177</sup> Also, a group of Suceava Armenians trading in Lviv feature in 1476 under the jurisdiction of the Armenian court of law in that town.<sup>178</sup>

Unfortunately, medieval sources left us do not allow any detailed identification of the family line for wealthy families in towns. Marriage arrangements were generally made between urbanites on a social and economic par. Another criterion was religion. Town dwellers preferred marrying their children into town families as well, even if they were from different settlements. Lucaci the potter, a Saxon from Baia, marries his daughter with Androscuis from Cotnari.<sup>179</sup>

The Church and the priests were prominent in the societal scheme. In the 15th–16th centuries, priests in Orthodox or Catholic churches in towns, as well as bishops, were called to have their say in major community matters, in trials, in the laying of boundaries or testimonies.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>173</sup> *Album studiosorum*, vol. I, p. 22, 88; Górká, *Cronica*, p. 60. For 1405–1503, a full list in Introduction to Miron Costin, *Letopiseşul Ţării Moldovei*, ed. Eugeniu Barwiński (Bucharest, 1912), p. VII.

<sup>174</sup> Dan, *Ceşi*, p. 62; Manolescu, “Cultura oraşenească în Moldova,” pp. 80–81.

<sup>175</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. 54; P. P. Panaitescu, “Cel mai vechi act municipal din Moldova,” *RI*, vol. IX, no. 10–12 (1923), pp. 183–186.

<sup>176</sup> Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 331, doc. 126.

<sup>177</sup> Panaitescu, “Drumul comercial,” pp. 85–87.

<sup>178</sup> Iorga, *Relaţiile economice*, p. 12.

<sup>179</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 78, doc. 96.

<sup>180</sup> DIR, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 378, doc. 469; *Documente şi însemnări*, p. 172, doc. 80; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 36.

In Moldavia, data on the right of the Catholics to elect their own parish priest are unspecific. Later records suggest this happened in Iași, but the communities in Cotnari, Baia, Neamț, Bacău, Huși or Trotuș may have enjoyed this right as well.<sup>181</sup> In the 16th century, more and more monasteries begin to be erected in or near towns, while the priests and the monks gain importance. It was in this century as well that documents display an increase in the number of clergy owning land in towns or outside them.<sup>182</sup> Churches and monasteries rivaled the townspeople by the exemptions they enjoyed.<sup>183</sup> The autonomy of urban communities began receding as the Church set up, under consent and support of the princes, even more privileged locations in towns, extracted from the authority of the *șoltuzes*. In the period we have approached, the ruler mostly intervened for his foundations, erected until 1504 within his residences, which took up a separate area than towns.<sup>184</sup> For the rest, in this period, except Catholic monasteries, no monasteries were built in towns. Instead, since the rulers wished to provide a stable income for monasteries outside towns, they transferred to them some of the customs duties or donations they took from townspeople.<sup>185</sup> We do not know whether the tax collectors from the monasteries were guilty of abuses, but we cannot rule out such situations. From the 16th century, rulers purchase even more land and donate it to churches and monasteries; this process entered its full swing barely in the 17th century. The Church gradually becomes a rival for the townspeople, taking an even more active part in trade, that it carried out in its own stores.

In the first century of urban evolution in Moldavia, boyars were not a significant group in towns. Their number was greater where the ruler took permanent residence. Since Suceava was capital of the country, the boyars were in great numbers here, living as close to the residence as they could.<sup>186</sup> They otherwise showed no interest in owning land in towns, since they are not recorded as purchasing or selling

<sup>181</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 256–258, 272.

<sup>182</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 365, doc. 203; p. 419, doc. 236; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 24, doc. 30; p. 39, doc. 50.

<sup>183</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 392–392, doc. 277–278; II, p. 103, doc. 70; p. 189, doc. 134.

<sup>184</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 32, doc. 23. N. Grigoraș, “Proprietatea funciară și imobiliară a meseriașilor, negustorilor, boierilor și mănăstirilor din orașele moldovenești. Regimul și rolul ei (sec. XV–XVIII),” *AIIAI*, vol. VII (1970), pp. 86–89.

<sup>185</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 75, doc. 51; p. 154, doc. 104; p. 283, doc. 200; II, p. 94, doc. 65.

<sup>186</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 154–156.

such locations. Except for the group in the court, the rest of the boyars were still mostly rural, the town earning its appeal only from the 16th century on.<sup>187</sup>

The bulk of the townspeople was made up of merchants and craftsmen, with small businesses. They are not individualized as separate groups, but are generically called *târgoveși*.<sup>188</sup> In Moldavia, one special category has invited speculation, the so-called “the pauper people” or the “paupers” (Old Slav. *uboghi*, Rom. *sărăci*). In 1458, Ștefan the Great confirmed for the Metropolitan Church in Roman some villages near the town, the “paupers” in them being placed under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan.<sup>189</sup> Several years later in 1470, the “paupers” in Hârlău are mentioned as selling a vineyard to the ruler; their names show them to be mostly Hungarian.<sup>190</sup> The privileges granted to Vaslui and Bârlad also mention the “poor” in those towns.<sup>191</sup> We will also find them in trade. Petru the Lame asked for some money to be refunded from Armenian merchants in Suceava, referred to as “our poor.”<sup>192</sup> We believe that the cited documents distinguish between two types of “paupers.” The ones in 1458 are evidently serfs, since they are under the control of the Church. Instead, the other ones, in towns, are free. Hungarian serfs did exist in Moldavian towns, but no Armenians, for that matter.<sup>193</sup> The Hungarians in Hârlău are noted as owning vineyards so we may well place them among town inhabitants. The paupers in Vaslui and Bârlad were in the same situation.<sup>194</sup> Among the “paupers” were simple merchants or craftsmen, other than patricians, which were “the good people.” They were on the lower echelon of urban social hierarchy, lacking the prestige that wealth and high positions brought.

In or around towns, there were certainly serfs (Rom. *vecini*), slaves (Rom. *robi*) and marginals (Rom. *calici*). They could be accepted as inhabitants, but not as members of the town community too. Since they were not free, the *șoltuz* was not responsible for them. They

<sup>187</sup> Grigoraș, “Proprietatea,” pp. 87–88, 90–92.

<sup>188</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 179, doc. 127; II, p. 38, doc. 28.

<sup>189</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>190</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 247, doc. 166.

<sup>191</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; p. 279, doc. 151.

<sup>192</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 661, doc. 1224.

<sup>193</sup> The case of the Hungarians in the village of Lucăcești, near Roman (DRH, A, II, p. 119, doc. 84).

<sup>194</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 122–123.



depended on a lord, which could be a boyar, a monastery or the ruler himself.<sup>195</sup> The slaves had the lowest status. Gypsies are yet to be noted, as opposed to Wallachia.<sup>196</sup> Instead, around Moldavian towns, in the 14th–15th centuries, there were Mongol slaves (Rom. *tătari*). They were most likely prisoners who had been subjected to rulers, settled near places where residences existed, and forced to provide for them.<sup>197</sup> Villages with Mongol slaves called Tătărași were near Baia, Neamț, Piatra lui Crăciun, Iași, Roman, Suceava and Botoșani.<sup>198</sup> In 1528, diplomat Georg Reicherstorffer estimated the number of Mongol households in Moldavia to 500; they also had military duties.<sup>199</sup> There are Mongol war prisoners in Poland as well, where they were colonised as serfs in less populated areas. In time, they were assimilated.<sup>200</sup> A similar process occurred in Moldavia too, where sources certify that some Mongol slaves had been set free.<sup>201</sup> The slaves in the village near Baia were even allowed to trade, with the townspeople powerless to suppress their competition.<sup>202</sup> They are gradually replaced by Gypsies arriving here from Wallachia.<sup>203</sup> The cripple or the beggars were the marginals, living off charity from the townspeople, the ruler, or the monasteries. In the 14th–16th centuries, sources neglect them, and make no mention in their respect.

Moldavian towns were multi-ethnic in structure. Along with the Romanians, Germans, Hungarians, Armenians, Ruthenians (“Russians”), and later, Greeks came here. By ruler’s consent, each community kept its own method of organization, as the same Reicherstorffer confirms: “[in Moldavia], each nation uses and abides by the laws and its customs by their own choosing;” “[...] each sect or people follows its rites and laws as they see fit.”<sup>204</sup> Towns had a loose ethnic and religious structure, similar to other settlements in the defunct Galician

<sup>195</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 62, doc. 36.

<sup>196</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 151, doc. 107.

<sup>197</sup> Cihodaru, “Constituirea statului,” p. 68.

<sup>198</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 23, doc. 16 (Baia); p. 237, doc. 169 and p. 367, doc. 259 (Neamț); II, p. 151, doc. 107; *Documente și însemnări românești*, p. 198, doc. 106 (Piatra lui Crăciun); DRH, II, p. 268, doc. 182 (Iași); III, p. 71, doc. 39 (Roman); DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 278, doc. 244 (Suceava); XVII, A, I, p. 139, doc. 200 (Botoșani).

<sup>199</sup> *Călători străini*, I, p. 197.

<sup>200</sup> Zientara, “Melioratio terrae,” p. 32.

<sup>201</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 367, doc. 259.

<sup>202</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>203</sup> Achim, *Țigani*, pp. 22–25.

<sup>204</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 193, 196–197; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 297.

Rus', where the locals were oftentimes overwhelmed by the German, Polish, Armenian, Jewish or even Mongol newcomers.<sup>205</sup>

One of the few cases where town documents make conscious note of the multi-ethnic component in a community is in Roman. A late 1588 document is issued by "we, the townspeople of Roman [...], Hungarian, Vlachs, and Saxons," testifying for a town inhabitant.<sup>206</sup> The phrases "the Romanian *șoltuz*" or "the Armenian *șoltuz*" noting leading figures in the same town reveal that urban communities were aware of their ethnic mix. Instead, in Baia, the rulers only address the Germans (*saxi*), probably since they were the bulk of the town population.<sup>207</sup> Even though other categories are not mentioned in documents, archaeological research certifies a Romanian neighbourhood as well here. Saxons were a coherent group not only in Baia, but in Siret as well; however, the lack of statistics prevents us from knowing their exact population quota.<sup>208</sup> Narrative sources are vague and only provide numbers in later times. Even before 1404, John of Sultanieh visits Moldavia and claims that: "there are many Germans living in these parts."<sup>209</sup> Germans also dwelled in Suceava, Neamț, Roman, Hârlău and Cotnari. They collaborated with Moldavian rulers, who needed scholars versed in Latin and German. Olgierd Górká believed Hărman, *pârcălab* of Cetatea Albă and trusted friend to Ștefan the Great, to be a Saxon in one of Moldavia's towns.<sup>210</sup> Herman was, according to Górká, the author of the *Cronica moldo-germană*,<sup>211</sup> but not all historians concur.<sup>212</sup> Hungarians mostly settled in the central area of Moldavia. The ones living in Trotuș, Adjud and Bacău are older, and had arrived here when the area was under the control of the Hungarian king (especially in the 14th century). The Hungarians in Roman, Hârlău, Cotnari, Iași and Huși arrive a little later, supported by the Moldavian rulers.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Kozubská-Andrusiv, *Urban Development*, pp. 204–205.

<sup>206</sup> *Moldvai Csángó-Magyar Okmánytár, 1467–1706*, vol. I, ed. Kálmán Benda (Budapest, 1989), p. 82, doc. 10.

<sup>207</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 237, doc. 169; II, p. 34, doc. 26; p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>208</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

<sup>209</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 39.

<sup>210</sup> Górká, *Cronica*, pp. 48–63.

<sup>211</sup> Górká, *Cronica*, pp. 65–67.

<sup>212</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>213</sup> Moldovanu, "Toponimia Moldovei," p. XLIX.

The medieval man saw confessional identity as a matter of utmost importance, so the rulers accepted that the Saxons and the Hungarians in Moldavia have their own Catholic bishoprics. The 14th–15th centuries saw bishoprics rise in southern Moldavia (the Milcovia bishopric, 1347), and in the northern parts (Siret, 1371, and Baia, c. 1413–1420) and in the centre (Bacău, c. 1391–1392).<sup>214</sup> The last is the only one to survive throughout the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church and the pope saw these bishoprics as a way to extend their political and religious influence and attract would-be converts. This policy yielded limited results and, except for Catholic colonists, no data exists on the success of converting to Catholicism the predominant Romanian population. Except for Lațcu, no other ruler in the 14th–15th centuries forfeit their Orthodox faith. Catholic churches are indicative of the size of Catholic communities. Only one church existed in Iași, Pietra lui Crăciun, Hârlău, Bârlad, Vaslui, Trotuș and Huși. There were two churches in towns with larger communities, like in Baia, Siret, Roman, Bacău, Neamț, Suceava, or even three, as in Cotnari.<sup>215</sup>

The status of Armenians in Moldavian towns was similar to that of those in Wallachia. They were allowed to hold estates within towns, but they could not own land (except vineyards).<sup>216</sup> In 1384, Armenians were numerous enough to determine Petru I to decide on their organization. In this year, the prince subjects the Armenians in his country to the Armenian bishop of Lviv. The source certifying this is a late one, but Petre P. Panaitescu believes it valid, since its information is backed up by other sources. It was from 1384 as well that a letter was kept mentioning *Mankerman* (Cetatea Albă?) among Armenian-inhabited areas, and from 1386 we will find that some Armenians in Moldavia had robbed some merchants coming from Poland.<sup>217</sup> Another document refers to the Armenians in Suceava and Siret in 1388. Ultimately, 1394 offers us the foundation act for the Armenian church in Kamieniec which mentions Ohanes, archbishop of the Armenians in the lands of Russia and Moldavia, "with his see in Lviv."<sup>218</sup> Ohanes has his rights over Moldavian Armenians confirmed by Alexandru the Good

<sup>214</sup> Rosetti, "Despre unguri," p. 313.

<sup>215</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. IV, pp. 37–42; vol. V, pp. 75, 177–186, 226–251.

<sup>216</sup> Codrescu, *Uricariul*, vol. XI, p. 263.

<sup>217</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 284–285; Gorovei, *Mușatinii*, p. 31.

<sup>218</sup> Panaitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru," pp. 46–48.

in 1401. The prince decreed that the bishop's see in his country was to be near the seat in Suceava, a town with probably the largest community of Armenians. It was barely in 1506, the bishopric of Armenians in Moldavia is separated from the one in Lviv.<sup>219</sup> In Suceava, Armenians initially had a wooden church, rebuilt in stone in 1521, and a monastery, Hagigadar, founded in 1512. Another monastery which got the name Zamca was later erected by Agopşin Vartanian, from Lviv.<sup>220</sup> Other Armenians were in Kilia and Cetatea Albă.<sup>221</sup> They are also found in Hotin, Siret, Roman, Botoşani, Iaşi and Vaslui where their numbers were small.<sup>222</sup> A source mentions them as a special corps in Ştefan the Great's army, when he was trying to keep the Ottomans at bay in 1476.<sup>223</sup> Ştefan Rareş commands that Armenians be converted in 1551. As Grigore Ureche's chronicle notes: "the Armenians, some by their choosing, and swayed by promise, others by force, were they christened and returned to true faith, but many left country and made for Turkish or Polish ground and other countries, wishing to abide by their own faith."<sup>224</sup> In Suceava, the Armenian church is destroyed, and so is the church, and the *voit*, the *pârgari* and the Armenian townspeople bear the brunt of the ruler's wrath.<sup>225</sup> The same happened to Armenians in other towns.<sup>226</sup>

The northern towns in Moldavia also had Ruthenians (called "Russians" in sources) who probably undertook trade. They had a church, a priest and their own street in Suceava, hence their own neighbourhood, but we do not know whether they were granted the right to have their own representative, like the Saxons or the Armenians.<sup>227</sup> At that point, the leader of the townspeople community was probably accountable for them too. Another group of Ruthenians was

<sup>219</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 21, doc. 14; II, p. 9, doc. 7; p. 10, doc. 9; p. 60, doc. 43; p. 89, doc. 60; Gorovei, "Note de istoric," pp. 213–214.

<sup>220</sup> Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 310, doc. 57; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 346; Panaitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru," p. 50.

<sup>221</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>222</sup> Buiuciu, *Cânt de jălire*, p. 39; Siruni, "Bisericile armene," pp. 489–526. The Armenians in Roman and Suceava held vineyards in Cotnari, where no Armenian community is mentioned, however (*Din tezaurul*, p. 68, doc. 94).

<sup>223</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 136–137.

<sup>224</sup> Ureche, *Letopiseţul*, p. 157; *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 90, 105.

<sup>225</sup> Panaitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru," p. 48; Siruni, "Mărturiile armeneşti," pp. 271–277.

<sup>226</sup> Buiuciu, *Cânt de jălire*, pp. 31–44.

<sup>227</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100; Baş, *Bisericile şi mănăstirile*, p. 535.

near Suceava, colonised by Iațco's monastery. They were serfs, even though they had received rights similar to the townspeople: the right to use the town domain, to apply themselves to crafts and trade, trade exemptions etc. The Greeks are also noted among the people who could be colonized by the monastery here.<sup>228</sup> The cited document was issued on the 23rd of February 1453, shortly before the fall of Constantinople into Ottoman grasp, so Greeks wishing to avoid foreign and “heathen” dominion were already pouring in from the Balkans. Their numbers would increase dramatically after 1500.<sup>229</sup> There were also Italian communities in the harbour-towns by the Danube and the Black Sea. Substantial groups of Genovese inhabited Kilia and Cetatea Albă, where they enjoyed increased autonomy.<sup>230</sup>

The 16th century would bring modifications to the ethnic make-up of Moldavian towns. As prepared by the Hussite movement, which had followers in Moldavian towns too, the religious Reform drew Catholic communities into the Protestant faith.<sup>231</sup> The danger of the Protestant movement reaching the Orthodox led some rulers to resort to suppression and forced conversions: those under Ștefan Rareș against the Armenians, the Hungarians, and the Saxon Protestants, or those of Alexandru Lăpușeanu and Ștefan Tomșa, against Protestants as a whole. The short rule of Despot, who supported the Protestants, only succeeded in escalating the crisis.<sup>232</sup> The lack of safety, the ever-increasing intolerance of rulers, as well as the mixed marriages led some to relinquish their faith, and others to leave for Transylvania or Poland.<sup>233</sup> Towns gradually become predominantly Romanian, keeping however small communities of Armenians, Germans, and Hungarians until the 18th century. Instead, there is a significant influx of Greek, and then Jews.<sup>234</sup> They are joined by Turkish merchants, and the ethnic tableau

<sup>228</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 38, doc. 28.

<sup>229</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 466, doc. 422; III, p. 331, doc. 402; *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 131–132.

<sup>230</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 50.

<sup>231</sup> Manolescu, “Cultura orășenească în Moldova,” pp. 84–88; Claudia Dobre, “Preaching, Conversion, Ministering and Struggling Against Hussites: the Mendicants’ Missionary Activities and Strategies in Moldavia From the 13th to the First Half of the 15th Century,” *RESEE*, vol. XLII, no. 1–4 (2004), pp. 71–86.

<sup>232</sup> *Cronicle slavo-române*, p. 90, 105; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 157; *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 99, 131–132, 140–141, 266–267; vol. V, p. 25, 81; Papacostea, “Moldova în epoca Reformei,” pp. 61–76; Crăciun, *Protestantism*, pp. 38–40.

<sup>233</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 523–524; vol. IV, p. 43.

<sup>234</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 341, doc. 155.

in towns shifts, taking on a more eastern aspect from the 17th and the 18th centuries. Ethnic transformations shook the entire society. The ancient Saxon patriciate trading with Polish and Transylvanian towns is gradually superseded by a new patriciate, made up of merchants focused on trading with the East.

### *Economy*

Trade was at the foundation of the urban economy in Moldavia. Written sources are scarce in this regard as well, noting information relating almost exclusively to foreign trade. This is why a complete picture of urban economy is hard to create. When researching crafts practiced in towns, we will have to resort to the result of archaeological excavations.

Ever since the latter half of the 14th century, Moldavia took full advantage of new trade routes being opened. They connected Christian kingdoms in Central Europe, Poland, and Hungary, which were on a political and economic rise, and the Black Sea, where Italian navigators operated, especially the Genovese and the Venetians. The rise of the Romanian Principalities allowed these roads to stabilize in the area between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Dniester. Merchants in Moldavia acted as middlemen on these routes. They held two roads to be the most important:

1. the “Mongolian road”, then coming to be referred to as the “Moldavian road”, which linked Poland (Lviv) and the Black Sea (Cetatea Albă);
2. the road which connected Hungary (Braşov) and the Black Sea (Kilia).

Trade was influenced by the decisions and the political orientation of the local rulers and the kings of Poland and Hungary. Until the end of the 14th century, the first road became part of Moldavia, whereas the land the other road crossed became an object of contention between Wallachia and Moldavia. The conflict between the two countries lasted several decades (around 1420–1473), and Moldavia prevailed.<sup>235</sup> The

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<sup>235</sup> Papacostea, “Politica externă,” pp. 13–28.

golden age of Moldavian trade lasted as long as its prince controlled the strongholds in the Danube delta (Kilia, Licostomo) and at the seaside (Cetatea Albă). The Ottomans conquered them in 1484, and the Porte gradually gained influence over this region in the former half of the 16th century, dealing a heavy blow to internal and foreign trade. The effects would later become felt and will have to do with economic transformations at a continental level.

For Moldavia, the main venue for foreign trade was inaugurated due to the gain in importance of the “Moldavian road” in the latter half of the 14th century. Signs of the prosperity brought on by trade can be witnessed ever since the first documents issued by princes. In 1384, Petru I donated the customs of Siret to the Dominican church.<sup>236</sup> Three years later, it was the same prince who pledged his fealty as a vassal to King Władysław Jagiełło, in Lviv, choosing its more powerful neighbour to the north. Income derived from taxed commerce were already high enough, so Petru responded positively to a demand for financial help by his sovereign, sending him no less than 3000 silver roubles in 1388.<sup>237</sup> An acknowledgement of allegiance towards the Polish king by Alexandru the Good in 1404 and 1407 is followed by negotiations, concluded in 1408 by the granting of a trade privilege to merchants in Lviv, former Galician Rus’ and Podolia.<sup>238</sup> This law regulated economic relations between the two parties all throughout the 15th century, being acknowledged by all the rulers to follow (in 1434, 1456, 1460).<sup>239</sup>

The privilege of 1408 is one of the most detailed laws of its kind issued by Moldavian rulers. It indicated the various types of merchandise available via Polish merchants, the taxes dues, the tax exemptions in place, as well as roads and customs. The main products traded were: cloth, spices, various animals, fish, leather, fur, wax, clothing, weapons etc. The law had a special provision: the Poles wishing to sell cloth in Moldavia could only do so in Suceava, where the main customs of the country existed. By this decision, Alexandru the Good granted the capital town staple right for cloth, but only for those retailed. The ones

<sup>236</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

<sup>237</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, pp. 599–605, doc. 162–164.

<sup>238</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 625, doc. 173; pp. 628–630, doc. 175–176.

<sup>239</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 667, doc. 186; p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. CXXVIII.

speculating this were town merchants who sold this cloth throughout the country, buying it at its Lviv price from other merchants coming from there. They were the final piece in a true commercial chain, which originated in Western Europe, especially Flanders. This is where cloth was manufactured and then taken by German tradesmen, who sold it to the Poles, and who consequently brought it to the Romanian Principalities, to be acquired by local merchants.<sup>240</sup> Suceava was the main marketplace in the country. The money brought by cloth afforded Poles “Tatar merchandise” such as silk, pepper, incense or “Greek wine”. It was here as well that Poles were allowed to own a house, possibly as a commercial venue or inn. Despite this concession, the ruler did not grant them any tax exemptions in town, so as not to prejudice the local inhabitants. They are allowed to sell alcohol, meat or bread if they pay the same taxes as the other townspeople.

In this document, Moldavia is featured as a retail market, but also as a transit area. Following negotiations, the Poles were granted the right to carry cloth through Moldavia, to sell it in Wallachia or Transylvania. This involved the cloth sold in bulk, and not retail, held in Suceava. The south provided them with wax, wool, pepper, fish (from Brăila), and Transylvania with silver, wax and marten furs. As a side note, the privilege of 1408 mentions two types of transport for goods, also considered units of measurement for the customs, the so-called “German cart”, and the “Armenian cart”. The latter was probably also the bigger, since the taxes were higher for it. In Lviv and in all the major cities of the area, including those at the Moldavian boundary (Sniatyn, Kamieniec), large groups of Armenians settled, creating a commercial network with Armenians in other areas, Moldavia included. In 1402, Armenians in Lviv were granted the right to trade in the entire Polish kingdom, former Galician Rus’ and Lithuania included. Although it was only in 1505 that they were partially exempt of taxes for merchandise brought in from *Valahia* (in this case Moldavia), the Ottoman Empire, Hungary, Crimea, and Silesia, the Armenians were already present on these markets, and especially on the Eastern ones, where they were very active.<sup>241</sup> More Armenians in Lviv feature as being in debt to merchants in Cetatea Albă in the latter half of the 15th

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<sup>240</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 26–27; Carter, *Trade and Urban Development*, pp. 93–102, 143–153; Nadel-Golobič, “Armenians and Jews,” pp. 355–357.

<sup>241</sup> Nadel-Golobič, “Armenians and Jews,” pp. 360–365.



century. The Ottoman occupation of the latter town, in 1484, did not put an end to this trade.<sup>242</sup>

Along with the trade in cloth and Oriental products, the 1408 privilege mentions animal trade several times. Animal meat was much sought after in Central Europe (Poland, Germany), where population was on the rise. Horses in Moldavia were also very much appreciated.<sup>243</sup> Those purchasing cattle were to pay customs duty only at the place of purchase and in Suceava, being exempt from other customs.<sup>244</sup> In Moldavia, livestock were culled and taken to the markets in Galicia, at Sniatyn, Kolomyia, Drohobycz and Tysmienicz. Large herds were formed here, spending the winter at the foot of the Carpathians, and then being resold and sent to Lviv. From here, they left for Kraków, Wrocław, and then for Germany. If they ran into harm on this course, the Polish king was asked to intervene. In 1484, following complaints by merchants in Lviv, claiming that some Polish noblemen seized the oxen bought in markets in Podolia and Moldavia, under pretext they had been stolen, the king ordered the all abuses were to cease.<sup>245</sup> Half a century later (1557), merchants in Suceava complained that Jews in Vladimir had confiscated the oxen they were taking to the fair in Lviv.<sup>246</sup> Animal trade continued to thrive in the 16th–17th centuries as well.<sup>247</sup>

It was not only the Lvivan merchants who were conducting business in the Moldavian markets. In the 15th–16th centuries, merchants from Kraków are present as well, bringing along cloth and metal objects, and purchasing cattle and Oriental products, especially fabric and spices.<sup>248</sup> The rulers of Moldavia encouraged Lithuanian merchants to come here as well. A later document, by Ștefan the Great (1496), mentions previous arrangements, ever since Alexandru the Good was prince, allowing for free access on the Moldavian market for Lithuanian merchants. This document showed a mutual relationship between Moldavian merchants, who could buy and sell merchandise in Lithuania.<sup>249</sup> Provisions stimulating the trade between Moldavia and the

<sup>242</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–295.

<sup>243</sup> Pach, “The Shifting” pp. 310–311.

<sup>244</sup> For the price of cattle, see Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 113–117.

<sup>245</sup> DH, vol. II, part 2, p. 278, doc. 249.

<sup>246</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 341, doc. 155.

<sup>247</sup> Carter, *Trade*, pp. 132–134; 244–246; p. 422, note 387.

<sup>248</sup> Carter, *Trade*, pp. 151, 273, 329.

<sup>249</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 390, doc. CLXXII.

Polish-Lithuanian union, payment of the due customs duties included, are laid down in the treaties concluded in 1499 and 1510 with the Polish king.<sup>250</sup>

In their turn, many merchants from Moldavian towns had business to attend to in Lviv. The oldest trade concluded by a townsman in Siret at Lviv on record is dated 1382. Among foreign tradesmen gaining right to citizenship in the Polish town between 1405 and 1426, 5 are Moldavian, 7 are Hungarian, and 4 are German. Between 1461 and 1495, no less than 18 from Moldavia, 3 from Hungary and 3 Czechs are noted as having this right, indicating how important affairs with Moldavia were. Most were Catholic Saxons, since the Romanian, being Orthodox, could not be granted citizenship. Romanians are certainly present on the Lvivan market, such as Vlad *Walachus* (1407), Pașcu of Siret (1441) and one Vasile of *Valahia* (1448). Kraków was in a similar situation, granting citizenship to 16 Moldavian merchants from 1403 until 1500. In 1432, a merchant from Cetatea Albă is registered as far as Poznań. Wars affected the good trade relations between the two parties. After 1495, no merchant from Moldavia appears in Lviv, a situation partly explained by the unfavourable political relations between the two countries, climaxing in the 1497 war. Trade returns to normal in 1500.<sup>251</sup>

The 1408 privilege, as well as the charters issued after it, created an unbalanced situation. Compared to the Lvivan merchants, who were afforded relatively free passage through Moldavia, local merchants were prevented from doing the same in Poland, because of the staple right held by Lviv in 1380. Moldavia thus became a simple go-between in Polish trade with the Eastern world, and was not an exclusive intermediary. In this light, Lviv was for Moldavia the intermediary that Brașov was for Wallachia. Merchants south of the Carpathians had limited room for action in Transylvania. This was because of the compromise reached between the ruler of Wallachia and the king of Hungary, who wished to expand his authority over to the Lower Danube. A significant difference was that the ruler of Moldavia could negotiate a better status for merchants in his towns from a different standpoint, since the Polish king did not have the means required to effectively extend his

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<sup>250</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part II, p. 154, doc. 322; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 417, doc. CLXXVIII; p. 442, doc. CLXXIX.

<sup>251</sup> Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial," pp. 84–87; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, pp. 327–328, doc. 115–118.

authority towards the Black Sea. Moldavia had a strongly centralized customs system, and Polish tradesmen, even though allowed passage through the country, were forced to pay taxes at each customs post they crossed.<sup>252</sup> Whereas the rulers in Wallachia could request the right to trade for their merchants in Transylvania, in the 15th century, those in Moldavia gained this right for a much vaster territory, covering former Galician Rus' and Lithuania. One of the provisions in the 1499 Moldavian-Polish treaty of Hârlău was meant to regulate the mutual freedom of trade for merchants of both countries, according to previous agreements. A new point in this treaty was that, in case of legal issues arising at the boundary, Polish subjects were to be put to trial at this boundary by the *staroste* of Hotin or by that of Cernăuți, and the Moldavian ones by the *staroste* of Kamieniec.<sup>253</sup>

Inhabitants of Moldavian towns had trade relations with Transylvania as well. The towns of Bistrița, Brașov or Sibiu were relatively close to the border, and the Moldavian princes provided privileges for their tradesmen, alluring them to markets east of the Carpathians. Alexandru the Good issued a trade privilege for merchants in Bistrița, which was the closest to Moldavia. The source document was not kept, but a 1412 text provides us with details on taxes levied at the Transylvanian customs. In July that year, Stibor, voivode of Transylvania, arrived in Bistrița to look into complaints by the locals concerning the abuses of customs officers in Rodna, who overtaxed merchants coming from Moldavia. It was at this point that the voivode reinstated the “liberties once held by customs and the *tricesima*”, stating the taxes collected off merchandise coming from Moldavia (cloth, livestock, fish, pepper and fat).<sup>254</sup> Since Stibor had acknowledged the privilege granted in Wallachia to the inhabitants of Brașov in September that year, we believe that the document issued for merchants in Bistrița contains, partly at least, provisions which brought to its full form an agreement between these townspeople and the ruler of Moldavia.<sup>255</sup> Unfortunately, 15th century sources lack details regarding the commercial relations

<sup>252</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 200–203.

<sup>253</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 417, doc. 178.

<sup>254</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 189, doc. 117.

<sup>255</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 191, doc. 118; Șerban Papacostea, “Kilia et la politique orientale de Sigismond de Luxembourg,” *RRH*, vol. XV, no. 3 (1976), pp. 423–426.

between the townspeople in Bistrița and those in Moldavia. Centuries 16th–17th have left us more substantial sources.<sup>256</sup>

Tradesmen in Brașov also brought merchandise to Moldavia. They were interested in having their access secured on the road towards Kilia, seen as an alternative to "the Brăila road". Rulers of Wallachia showed an ever-growing reluctance towards the liberties of Brașov in trade south of the Carpathians, and began hindering the practice of merchants from across the mountains. The road through Moldavia towards the Danube and the sea was a reliable option that the Hungarian kings pressured for. The one granting the first privilege for Brașov was no other than Alexandru the Good. The original document is not kept, but many acknowledgements by his followers, including Ștefan the Great, make note of it.<sup>257</sup> It is likely that the privilege was issued before 1412 as well, as in the case of Bistrița. In September 1412, Știbor issued a different document, this time requesting the *comes* of the Szekler and the Brașov customs officers to stop collecting taxes from merchants coming from the "upper areas" of Moldavia.<sup>258</sup> This exemption was granted as part of the agreement for exemptions/reductions of customs duties that inhabitants of Brașov had in Moldavia, and which were noted by future documents. Trade with Moldavia is acknowledged by an injunction given by King Sigismund to the Szekler *comes* in 1419, demanding that merchants in Brașov should not be prevented from crossing the mountains with iron or other goods.<sup>259</sup> Even though Moldavia did not have control over Kilia most of the former half of the 15th century, merchants in areas east of the Carpathians could claim the status of middlemen for trade to the Black Sea. It was only when the political status changed that the privilege granted by Alexandru the Good was extended, the merchants in Brașov being granted the liberty of taking goods "overseas" as well (1449).<sup>260</sup> At that time, John Hunyadi, voivode of Transylvania and regent of the Kingdom of Hungary, was in control of Kilia, where he had set up a garrison.<sup>261</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. I–II, pp. 1–53.

<sup>257</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 313, doc. 215 (Ștefan II); p. 342, doc. 245–246 (Ștefan II and Ilie I); p. 393, doc. 283 (Roman II); p. 444, doc. 326 (Petru Aron); Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 261, doc. 125 (Ștefan the Great).

<sup>258</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 196, doc. 119.

<sup>259</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 205, doc. 126.

<sup>260</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 407, doc. 297.

<sup>261</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 204–207.

Cloth was one of the products that townspeople of Braşov brought to Moldavia. The privilege of 1437 specifically mentions the freedom to trade cloth, stating that cloth could not be sold "by *col*".<sup>262</sup> The *col* was a unit of measurement specific to fabric or cloth, so the ruler forbade their retail sale.<sup>263</sup> It was reserved for merchants in Moldavia, an information which comes to complete the dates in 1408, showing that the locals dealing with trade had the privilege of retail sale of cloth in the entire country in the 15th century. The 1449 document tells us that those coming from Braşov had the right to sell linen by retail. The taxes on cloth import, varying across quality and place of origin, are now detailed: cloth coming from the Low Countries, from Leuven, was subjected to the highest taxes. It was followed by that coming from Germany, Köln, and that brought from Buda. The cheapest (possibly since also lower in quality) was cloth brought from Czech lands. The money that cloth brought were put to good use: merchants were free to "drive oxen from our country to Hungary", since customs duties were remarkably low.<sup>264</sup> Along with animals, a debtors' register at the customs house, in 1480–1481, provides detailed information on what merchandise was brought from Moldavia to Transylvania: fish, livestock, furs, leather, wax, but also Mediterranean products such as lemons or figs, which reached Moldavia by sea.<sup>265</sup>

In their relationship with Braşov, many documents issued by rulers were kept following complaints advanced by tradesmen coming from Transylvania. They were discontent with having merchandise seized by town authorities in Moldavia, to cover some debts, even though privileges stated that this was only possible after trial, in Braşov. At other times, the local *şoltuzi* and *pârgari* did not let them sell small merchandise.<sup>266</sup> It was obvious that the restraints placed on trade by rulers of Moldavia towns were due to competition from the inhabitants of Braşov. Even so, Hungarian kings continued to acknowledge rights that Moldavian merchants enjoyed in Transylvania, like Matthias Corvinus in 1473.<sup>267</sup> However, the customs' registers kept to this day show a

<sup>262</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 342, doc. 245.

<sup>263</sup> Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoşii*, p. 87.

<sup>264</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 407, doc. 297.

<sup>265</sup> Gernot Nussbächer, "Un document privind comerţul Braşovului cu Moldova la sfârşitul secolului XV," *AIIAI*, vol. XXI (1984), pp. 425–437 and vol. XXII, no. 2 (1985), pp. 667–678.

<sup>266</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 312, doc. 214; p. 321, doc. 221.

<sup>267</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 80, doc. 138.

decrease in the numbers of Moldavian merchants in Braşov, at least at the end of the 15th century, since they probably preferred the markets in Bistriţa or towns in Poland. In 1503, in Braşov, the highest value from trade was derived by merchants from Suceava, with merchandise of over 210000 *aspri*, followed by those from Baia (around 145000 *aspri*), Roman (around 72000 *aspri*), Vaslui (around 61000 *aspri*) and Bârlad (around 54000 *aspri*).<sup>268</sup> The market in Braşov was most definitely dominated by merchants from Wallachia.<sup>269</sup>

In Transylvania, the status of the towns of Braşov and Bistriţa set them apart, since they were royal towns, organized distinctly from that of the other Saxons, grouped into *scaune*, lead by a *comes* of Sibiu.<sup>270</sup> The rulers of Moldavia were careful to grant them a privilege as well. In 1433, following negotiations with Sibiu envoys, Ilie I approves their “request to visit our country to trade.” For the products they were to bring, the Saxons were to pay customs duty in the town of Adjud (*opidum Egydhalma*), located on the road that merchants followed in order to enter Moldavia. No reference is made to specific goods, except livestock, gold, and silver.<sup>271</sup> The commercial balance swung significantly towards Sibiu merchants. Their registers were more prone to note dates on diplomatic exchanges, rather than Moldavian merchants, revealing that they were few in numbers on the Sibiu market.<sup>272</sup>

Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu once noted that he had seen in a private collection in Odessa a privilege granted to merchants in Genoa in 1409 by Alexandru the Good. That specific document has not been discovered to this day, but some historian believe it existed. Hasdeu mentioned a provision in the privilege, that we have reason to believe genuine, namely the right of the Genovese to hold a commercial venue in Cetatea Albă, the same as that held by the Poles in Suceava.<sup>273</sup> Alexandru did not issue all these privileges by chance, but they were part of a true commercial policy meant to ensure the export and the import of goods for the country. By concluding these treaties, the Polish to the north, the Transylvanians to the west, and the Genovese by the Black Sea became the main trading partners for Moldavia. Between the time

<sup>268</sup> Manolescu, *Comerţul*, pp. 261–262.

<sup>269</sup> Manolescu, *Comerţul*, pp. 172–173, 259–304.

<sup>270</sup> Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 114–115; *The History of Transylvania*, vol. I, pp. 219–224.

<sup>271</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207.

<sup>272</sup> See data in *Rechnungen*, vol. I.

<sup>273</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 21–25.

this privilege was granted and 1444, the Genovese were very active on the road linking the Black Sea to Poland via Moldavia. Discontent with their competition, the townspeople of Lviv were issued a document by King Władysław III, enforcing the staple right in their town, with a special provision for Italian merchants and those “overseas”. They were no longer allowed to go beyond Lviv and were not able to sell merchandise purchased in this town in Moldavia.<sup>274</sup> Even though the relations with Lviv were regulated in 1466,<sup>275</sup> one year before, the Genovese were dealt a heavy blow when Ștefan the Great conquered Kilia. Their access to the Danube, the last remaining trade route, was thus restricted, after the Ottoman had gained control over roads in dry land in the 14th–15th centuries.<sup>276</sup> Distancing himself from Hungary, which supported Genoa, Ștefan focused on bringing Venice by his side. Quarrels between the ruler of Moldavia and the Genovese were appeased between 1474 and 1475 following negotiations, but it was too late. The main port that Genoa controlled in the Black Sea, Caffa, was taken over by the Ottoman in 1475.<sup>277</sup> Even so, the presence of the Genovese in Moldavia does not end. In the latter part of Ștefan the Great’s reign, a Genovese banker is mentioned, Dorino Cattaneo, who was chamberlain and customs officer for the country. While he probably came here on business, this character bought the customs in the country, taking advantage of the failing supply of money and experienced financiers.<sup>278</sup>

Very little information on trade with the Mongols remains. In a 1428 letter by Ulug Muhammad, ruler of the Golden Horde, to sultan Murad II, the khan complains that Alexandru the Good forbade Mongol merchants from crossing Moldavia towards Ottoman land. It is likely that the measures taken by the ruler did not focus only on passage through his country, but also the silk, spice or fur trade that the Mongol carried out.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom V, p. 133, doc. 104; Șerban Papacostea, “Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare și genevezii din Marea Neagră,” *AIAT*, vol. XXIX (1992), p. 70; Ștefan Andreescu,  *Din istoria*, pp. 91–95.

<sup>275</sup> Hrochová, “Le commerce des Génois,” pp. 157–158.

<sup>276</sup> Papacostea, “Moldova lui Ștefan,” p. 70; Andreescu,  *Din istoria*, pp. 98–101.

<sup>277</sup> Papacostea, “Moldova lui Ștefan,” pp. 72–73.

<sup>278</sup> Iorga,  *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 296, doc. 14.

<sup>279</sup> Marcel D. Popa, “Aspecte ale politicii internaționale a Țării Românești și Moldovei în timpul lui Mircea cel Bătrân și Alexandru cel Bun,” *RDI*, vol. XXXI, no. 2 (1978), pp. 253–255, 262–265.

Suceava, seat for the ruler, was the commercial hub of the country. Beside this town, other major markets in the country were in the ports on the Danube and the Black Sea coast.<sup>280</sup> Trade through Moldavia or on the Dniester towards Cetatea Albă was very active. Polish sources mention cereals traded on the Dniester, Cetatea Albă being “a well-known port for the entire Podolia,” as Bielski’s chronicle points out.<sup>281</sup> Cereals were a significant component in trade with Cetatea Albă. As Italian trade registers show, large amounts of cereals were brought to Caffa from the border regions of the Black Sea and from there on to Genoa and Venice.<sup>282</sup> Along with the Genovese, Greek merchants were highly active in Cetatea Albă as well. In several documents kept in the Lviv archives, the Greek called Caloian features (referred to as *famosus negociator* in these documents), who loaned money and merchandise to Polish and Armenian merchants coming here.<sup>283</sup> Gheorghe Vallata, an inhabitant of Cetatea Albă as well, received a safe-conduct in 1469, whereby the Genovese allowed him to bring merchandise to Caffa and in Crimea.<sup>284</sup>

Cetatea Albă displayed an unique situation for trade in Moldavia, since slave trade was allowed. Genovese merchants bought slaves from the Mongols here and then sold them on the Constantinople markets.<sup>285</sup> Regulations enforced in Cetatea Albă by the Ottomans after the 1484 conquest show the existence of slave trade from areas controlled by the Mongols, mention also being made of the taxes collected following “the law of old times.”<sup>286</sup> After prince Petru Aron and the boyars agreed to pay the Ottomans a tribute, merchants in Cetatea Albă were granted by the sultan the privilege of trading in Adrianople, Bursa and Istanbul (1456).<sup>287</sup> Kilia, the second major Moldavian port on the Black Sea coast, was well-known for its fish. The town was near the Danube mouth, in an area where lakes abound. Part of the fish

<sup>280</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 133.

<sup>281</sup> Nastase, “Istoria moldovenească,” p. 126.

<sup>282</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 59–79; Ștefan Andreescu, “Noi știri despre exportul de cereale prin Cetatea Albă și gurile Dunării (prima jumătate a secolului al XV-lea),” *SMIM*, vol. XX (2002), pp. 321–326.

<sup>283</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–295; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, pp. 313–316, doc. 72–82.

<sup>284</sup> Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” p. 94.

<sup>285</sup> *Izvoarele istoriei României*, vol. IV, p. 383; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>286</sup> Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane*, p. 182, doc. XVI.

<sup>287</sup> *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, vol. I, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed (Bucharest, 1976), p. 2, doc. 2.



caught here was exported to Braşov, another, to Lviv, while the rest was sold in the country. Black caviar could also be purchased here.<sup>288</sup>

Towns of Moldavia held fairs, on dates well-known to merchants. Trade privileges assigned to foreign merchants are reminiscent of places where livestock were bought: in 1408, mention is made of their purchase in Bacău, Roman, Baia and Neamţ.<sup>289</sup> Animal markets were held near towns, where livestock were retailed to locals, and where foreign merchants bought entire herds. All the places where something was traded bore the same name in the 14th-16th centuries, that of *târg*, making it difficult for us to separate the regular market from periodic fairs. In Transylvania, fairs are mentioned in mid 14th century,<sup>290</sup> so we may assume that, in Moldavia, this type of trading location emerged in the same period or in the next century. The first known decisions when it comes to fairs belong to Alexandru Lăpuşneanu. To protect local merchants, he adopted measures similar to those that Neagoe Basarab took in Wallachia. He granted staple right to towns close to the borders: merchants in Bistriţa were to come only to Baia, those in Braşov to Trotuş, and those in Poland to Hotin. In these towns, fairs were to be held four times a year.<sup>291</sup> In 1579, the fair in Botoşani, one of the oldest in Moldavia, is certified along with the one in Şepeniţ.<sup>292</sup> In 1587, a large fair held in Cernăuţi during the Pentecost, where as much as 30000 heads of cattle were supposedly sold.<sup>293</sup> It is likely that these fairs were in existence from at least the 15th century on.

When trading with commercial centres in neighbouring countries, Moldavian rulers stood by their tradesmen. Privileges granted included mutual provisions, and, in case of abuse, rulers stepped in for their tradesmen.<sup>294</sup> Moldavia and Wallachia were engaged in a powerful rivalry. Even though they allowed mutual trade, neither of the two granted a town in the other country any privilege. Since very few

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<sup>288</sup> Nicoară Beldiceanu-Nădejde, “Ştiri otomane privind Moldova ponto-dunăreană (1486–1520),” *AIIAI*, vol. XXIX (1992), p. 91; Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte*, vol. II, p. 788, doc. 231; DRH, A, I, p. 371, doc. 262.

<sup>289</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>290</sup> Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 58–59.

<sup>291</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 569, doc. 1054; Ioan Bogdan, *Documente moldoveneşti din sec. XV şi XVI în arhivul Braşovului* (Bucharest, 1905), p. 62, doc. 30; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 381; Gh. Pungă, *Ţara Moldovei în vremea lui Alexandru Lăpuşneanu* (Iaşi, 1994), pp. 76–79.

<sup>292</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, p. 172, doc. 255.

<sup>293</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 209.

<sup>294</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 310, doc. 212.

documents are kept, we cannot elaborate an accurate picture over the dimensions of trade between the two parties. Both countries were lavish with the same supplies, raw materials, livestock, fish, salt, so it's hard to determine what was being imported or exported. In the few mentions when merchants from one country appear in the other, they carry other products than the traditional ones. In 1503, Nicolae of Suceava brought to Wallachia, via Braşov, knives, steel and metal objects, worth over 2000 aspri.<sup>295</sup>

Crafts were only second to trade in urban economy.<sup>296</sup> Their lesser growth was directly linked to the reduced capacity to absorb handicraft wares of the rural population, at least in the 14th century and early 15th. This impacted adversely internal trade, less developed than the international one, which was much more profitable. Towns produced goods, beyond a doubt, covering the local demand (rural and urban), a production rate which grew alongside an increasing quality in the 15th century.<sup>297</sup> Unfortunately, the destruction of town records over time leaves us with only the odd craftsman name. There is no information concerning the size of production or about the retail side.

Archaeological research revealed that one of the most well-developed crafts in towns was pottery. In this field, some craftsmen would create ceramics for daily use, whereas others were specialized on fine ceramic (decorated pots, stove and gutter tiles).<sup>298</sup> Other town crafts were focused on processing raw materials, such as hides, metal, bones, wood, stone, etc. Every craft of the above type filled a demand on the market, but profits varied greatly. The furrier or the leatherworker earned more than the mere tailor, just as how jewelcrafters or sword-makers had a higher income than the common blacksmith.<sup>299</sup> Several craftsmen in Suceava were protected by the Armenian law in Lviv. Among them, were leatherworkers, shoemakers and tailors.<sup>300</sup> It was in Suceava as well that the tomb of a Catholic bowyer was discovered,

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<sup>295</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, p. 51.

<sup>296</sup> Archaeologists take a opposite stance in the matter, even though the results of research is not relevant in supporting the theory that the production of goods was more important (Matei, *Geneză*, pp. 112–118).

<sup>297</sup> Matei, *Studii de istorie*, p. 67.

<sup>298</sup> Matei, *Studii de istorie*, pp. 74–75; Busuioc, *Ceramica de uz comun*, pp. 69–75. See also Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc, *Cahle din Moldova medievăli (secolele XIV–XVII)* (Suceava, 1999).

<sup>299</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 109–113.

<sup>300</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 11–13.

*Petrus arcufex*, slain in a battle with the *perfidios tatharos*, in 1513. The symbol of his trade, a bow, is etched in his tombstone.<sup>301</sup> It is likely that the most sought-after craftsmen in towns were woodworkers. Most homes, as well as the reinforced walls that surrounded the towns were made of wood, so these craftsmen were in high esteem. Since many churches were built, painters were in high demand as well.<sup>302</sup> Each town had artisans who provided for the basic needs of the inhabitants, especially that of food supplies: bakers, butchers, brewers, etc. Many craftsmen also traded, since their workshop was their shopping stall.<sup>303</sup> Craftsmen with more obscure occupations existed. On his tombstone in Suceava, Baptista of Vesentino is called *magister in diversis artibus*. This title sparked controversy, with the departed being considered a man of liberal arts, but also one engaged in a craft. However, judging by the aspect of his tombstone (eight points indicating astrological or astronomical endeavours), the first alternative is more likely.<sup>304</sup>

Mining can also be included among the specialized crafts. The name of the town of Baia was linked to mining operations, even though mines have yet to be discovered in the region and we cannot say for sure what type of ore was being extracted. Traces of iron slag and tools used to pour molten metal (possibly required to smelt copper) were discovered in town.<sup>305</sup> *Stupe*, ore grinding mills, are mentioned in an 1448 document and reveal that ore was processed at that date in Baia. The same document sees the term *jerstvilò* translated as "smithy".<sup>306</sup> Except for Baia, mining was an important occupation in Trotuș, where salt was extracted.<sup>307</sup> Another salt mine existed near Orhei, east of the Prut river.<sup>308</sup> The salt mines were property of the ruler,<sup>309</sup> who had encouraged foreign craftsmen, especially Hungarian, to settle in the area. Information regarding the mines is available since the 16th–17th centuries, but we may assume that work was carried

<sup>301</sup> Diaconu, "Contribuții," pp. 914–918.

<sup>302</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 400, doc. 755.

<sup>303</sup> See Ștefan Olteanu, Constantin Șerban, *Meșteșugurile din Țara Românească și Moldova în evul mediu* (Bucharest, 1969), pp. 63–111.

<sup>304</sup> Manolescu, "Cultura orașenească în Moldova," pp. 81–82; Diaconu, "Contribuții," pp. 914–923.

<sup>305</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 50–52; vol. 2, pp. 59–62, 112–115.

<sup>306</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 395, doc. 279. See also Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 92.

<sup>307</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

<sup>308</sup> DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 124, doc. 117.

<sup>309</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 503, doc. 283.

out in a much similar manner: craftsmen and salt miners gave one part of the salt to the prince, and retained the rest, selling it in the country.<sup>310</sup> Salt is not mentioned as a product in privileges for Polish or Transylvanian merchants, its sale being under strict supervision by the ruler. In the 1480–1481 register, only two salt transports are mentioned, as compared to almost 300 transports of fish and over 30 of wax, and leathers and furs respectively. It is likely that what little salt reached Braşov, it did so on not entirely legal venues.<sup>311</sup> Saltpetre was also produced near Trotuş, probably for gunpowder.<sup>312</sup>

Ever since the 14th–15th centuries, no documents regarding craftsmen grouping in their own quarter are kept. These quarters certainly existed, such as those of the potters, identified in sites at Suceava (the end of the 14th century) and Iaşi (15th century).<sup>313</sup> Potters, just like blacksmiths, had to live on the outskirts, since their workshops and their ovens posed a high risk of fire, often fatal for towns, where most houses were made of wood. Tanners and butchers shared this marginal position with them, since they needed plenty of water, but also because of the smell. Instead, in the market area, merchants were joined by other artisans who dealt in less unpleasant fields (usurers, tailors, etc). Since townspeople were inclined to group according to ethnical or religious criteria, this hindered the creation of quarters according to trade. Such quarters probably existed in towns with cohesive ethnical communities, such as those of the Germans in Baia or in Siret.

Townspeople in Moldavia had their sons learn crafts from Transylvanian artisans. In 1436, Ilie I asks the townspeople of Braşov to settle the situation of the son of a tailor from Roman, who had been sent by his father to learn how to cut the cloth.<sup>314</sup> Several decades later in 1472, Iohannes Rymer of Suceava wrote to the *judex* of Bistriţa about an apprentice from Suceava, learning the craft at a tanner in Bistriţa. The apprentice needed a certificate which would vouch for his skills, possibly to be able to become a journeyman.<sup>315</sup> In mid 16th century, documents in Braşov note the arrival in town of young Moldavians

<sup>310</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 130; Iorga, “Privilegiile şangăilor,” pp. 249–263.

<sup>311</sup> Nussbächer, “Un document,” pp. 425–437 (1984) and 667–678 (1985).

<sup>312</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 132.

<sup>313</sup> Matei, *Civilizaţie urbană medievală*, pp. 88–90; Busuioc, *Ceramica de uz comun*, p. 47; Alexandru Andronic, *Iaşi până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea* (Iaşi, 1986), pp. 16–17, 38–39.

<sup>314</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 323, doc. 224.

<sup>315</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 77, doc. 134.

wishing to learn crafts.<sup>316</sup> The lack of detailed documents prevents us from ascertaining the existence of a guild in towns in Moldavia (or in those in Wallachia, for that matter) organized following the model of those in Transylvania or Poland. It was claimed that such guilds had been active ever since early 15th century and that they had only Saxon members.<sup>317</sup> There is no evidence to support this theory. The above-mentioned letters lead us to assume that some local artisan associations, of an economic, religious, or charitable nature, did indeed function, but no statute or any other data on their structure have been preserved. Members associated by their line of work, like the 1472 letter of Suceava shows, or another one, mentioning “all the butchers” in Baia.<sup>318</sup> Other sources reveal that some craftsmen in Moldavia were part of the professional organizations of some towns in Transylvania. Two bootmakers in Baia were members of the Brotherhood of St John in Sibiu.<sup>319</sup> In the 15th–16th centuries, those addressing the issues of the craftsmen were the *șoltuz* and the *pârgari*, who were forced to represent them in issues having to do with relations with craftsmen in other towns. In special situations, the rulers’ representatives in towns were required to step in. The first known guilds emerge in Moldavia in the latter half of the 16th century (Suceava, the fraternity of the wallpainters, 1570), and in the next century.<sup>320</sup>

Tradesmen and craftsmen required the town leadership to intervene when there were commercial disputes to settle with business partners in other towns. One of the main issues was the lack of money, which had a lot of people take merchandise on credit from the townspeople of Bistrița or Brașov. Usually, other merchants became the surety and risked losing their own merchandise or being arrested if the debtor did not return it in time. The townspeople of Transylvania often committed abuse and the *șoltuz*, the *vornic* of the town or, in special cases, even the ruler intervened. In 1481, *Richter* and *Gesworen* of Suceava asked the *judex* in Bistrița to solve the issue of losses incurred by Peterman the butcher of Suceava, who had vouched for an inhabitant of

<sup>316</sup> DH, vol. XI, p. 798.

<sup>317</sup> Eugen Pavlescu, *Economia breslelor în Moldova* (Bucharest, 1939), p. 25.

<sup>318</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 77, doc. 134; p. 203, doc. 366.

<sup>319</sup> Manolescu, “Cultura orășenească în Moldova,” pp. 49–50; Matei, *Studii de istorie*, pp. 85–86; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 115–117.

<sup>320</sup> *Suceava. Fișe*, vol. I, p. 208, doc. 81; Pavlescu, *Economia*, pp. 64, 84–106; Grigoraș, *Instituții*, pp. 388–390.

Bistrița.<sup>321</sup> In 1510, Trotușan the treasurer sent word to Bistrița, asking for the release of several subjects of the ruler in Suceava, including Thomas the Saxon, Gabriel the “Wallach” and even Stan the *șoltuz*.<sup>322</sup> There were cases when the merchants in Bistrița borrowed money or merchandise from the inhabitants of Suceava. In 1504, Ulrich the *pâr-gar* asked for the return of some amounts of money loaned by several craftsmen in Bistrița.<sup>323</sup>

Another source of income for the townspeople were the mills they owned and operated. Rivers passed through or near all towns, which had waterways redirected exclusively for mills. These waterways were usually called Gârla Morilor or “the *târg* river”.<sup>324</sup> The place where mills were located was so significant, that there is even a document issued by a ruler at “the mills in Iași”.<sup>325</sup>

Trade and crafts were not the only occupations of the Moldavians. Those with smaller incomes derived from trade or crafts made a living by raising livestock or growing plants on the town domains.<sup>326</sup> In Baia, traces of animal sheds were discovered near some of the houses researched, as well as iron tools for ploughing, digging or mowing.<sup>327</sup> A similar situation is in Suceava, where even ploughing and furrowing blades were found, as well as pits designed to keep grains.<sup>328</sup> A 1453 document which allowed foreigners to settle near Iațco’s monastery near Suceava explicitly stated their right to grow wheat and to mow hay on the town domain, just like the townspeople did.<sup>329</sup> The number of agricultural tools found in sites is not high, showing that these pursuits were only secondary and not systematic in nature.<sup>330</sup> For the inhabitants of Hârlău, Cotnari, Iași and Huși, growing grapevines was much more profitable. It was here as well that settlers brought an important contribution: the place names reminiscent of them bear

<sup>321</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 113, doc. CCIII.

<sup>322</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 204, doc. CCCLXVIII.

<sup>323</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 178, doc. 110.

<sup>324</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 144, doc. 75; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 151.

<sup>325</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 574, doc. 514.

<sup>326</sup> Wealthy merchants and craftsmen were not engaged in agriculture. Their houses have no traces indicating such pursuits. At most, they had vineyards, worked by others or leased (Diaconu, “Observații,” pp. 278–279).

<sup>327</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 45–48; vol. 2, pp. 49–58.

<sup>328</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 91–92.

<sup>329</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 38, doc. 28.

<sup>330</sup> Matei, *Studii de istorie*, pp. 78–79.

evidence. In Iași, the name of certain hills with vineyards are Hungarian in origin: Copou, Țicău. Some wine names are of certain foreign origin: *Frânçușă*, *Braghina*, *Sghihara*, etc. The word *cramă* (winecellar) and *butnar* (cooper) are German, and the units of measurement termed *firta* and *corocini* are German, and Hungarian in origin. All these added to the local terminology, be it Romanian or Slavonic.<sup>331</sup> The Saxons in Baia had vineyards in the county of Neamț or in Cotnari,<sup>332</sup> whereas in Hârlău and Cotnari we may find vineyards held by Hungarian, Saxon, Romanian, and Armenian townspeople.<sup>333</sup> One part of the wine produced here was sold in the taverns in town, whose owners paid a *camena* to the ruling authority.<sup>334</sup> The other part was exported, being sold and appreciated in Lviv and Kraków included, where it features as *vinum valachicum*.<sup>335</sup> The Saxons also brewed beer. Small breweries are mentioned in Baia and Suceava.<sup>336</sup>

The quarrels over land and the wars took their toll on the towns. During the conflict between the two principalities, Ștefan the Great attacked the Danubian ports of Wallachia. After 1465, Ștefan wished to consolidate Kilia's status as the main port centre on the Lower Danube, but it faced competition from Brăila. Ștefan consequently attacks and sets this town on fire in 1470, with the same fate befalling Floci further to the south. Three years later, the capital in Bucharest comes under siege and is occupied.<sup>337</sup>

The conquest of Kilia and Cetatea Albă by the Ottomans in 1484 marks the beginning of a lengthy process that cements the Ottoman influence over south-east Europe. By its control over the Danube and more important centres in the Black Sea, the Empire gradually draws Moldavia as well in its area of political and economic power. Ștefan the Great's attempt to counteract the growth of Ottoman authority, by reinforcing his alliance with Poland in 1485, proved futile after Poland

<sup>331</sup> C. Cihodaru, "Podgoriile de la Cotnari și Hârlău în economia Moldovei din secolele XV–XVIII," *Analele Științifice ale Universității Al. I. Cuza Iași. Istorie*, tom X (1964), pp. 4–5.

<sup>332</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 237, doc. 169; p. 342, doc. 241; *Călători străini*, V, p. 326.

<sup>333</sup> *Din tezaurul*, p. 68, doc. 94; *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 208, doc. 81; DRH, A, II, p. 247, doc. 166; III, p. 144, doc. 75; p. 433, doc. 244; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 78, doc. 96.

<sup>334</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288; II, p. 1, doc. 2.

<sup>335</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 15, 18; Carter, *Trade*, pp. 158–160.

<sup>336</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 23, doc. 16; DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 42, doc. 47; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 194–195.

<sup>337</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 16–17, 30–31; DRH, A, II, p. 286, doc. 191.

concluded a peace treaty with the Turks. Ștefan's inheritors attempted to follow in his footsteps, and assign Moldavia an intermediary position in the trade between Central Europe and the Eastern world. Bogdan III, Ștefăniță, Petru Rareș or Alexandru Lăpușneanu concluded or acknowledged the commercial agreements that provided free passage for the Poles and the Ottomans in Moldavia, but not actually allowing them to cross the country, and forcing them to sell merchandise in specific towns. Common pressures, both Polish and Ottoman, determined the rulers of late 16th century to forfeit this attitude, with negative consequences on the local tradesmen.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 210–214.





## CHAPTER THREE

### CASE STUDIES

#### *Adjud*

The town of Adjud developed north of where the Trotuș river joined the Siret and where the parallel-running roads crossed. In the 1408 privilege, the customs duty in southern Moldavia was levied in Bacău.<sup>1</sup> Even though a settlement already existed in Adjud, it is not mentioned because of its yet poor development.<sup>2</sup> Its status changed once the political and economic climate changed as well. To cross the mountains, the Transylvanian merchants used the Oituz pass, which had not come under Moldavian control at that point.<sup>3</sup> When reaching the town of Trotuș, the alternatives were: to travel north (towards Piatra lui Crăciun, Bacău or Suceava), they had to follow the Tazlău river valley; to reach the Danube and the Black Sea (to Kilia), they had to travel the road accompanying the Trotuș river valley, a boundary between Moldavia and Wallachia until c. 1417–1423.<sup>4</sup> Since this road followed a path south of the river, through a land controlled by Wallachia, the Adjud settlement was bypassed. After c. 1417–1423, Alexandru the Good subjects the land south of the Trotuș, so the merchants in Transylvania would be encouraged to cross Adjud as well, without having to pay inter-country customs tax. The new trade route (Oituz-Trotuș-Adjud-Bacău) would become official in 1433 due to Ilie I's efforts, who grants a trade privilege to the Saxons in Sibiu; they were to pay customs tax *in opidum Egydhalma*.<sup>5</sup> The *oppidum* label shows that the settlement of Adjud was about to gain town status. As a customs house and a local marketplace, Adjud also features in a

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<sup>1</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandru Artimon, *Civilizația medievală urbană din secolele XIV–XVII (Bacău, Tg Trotuș, Adjud)* (Iași, 1998), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Iosipescu, “Drumuri comerciale,” p. 275.

<sup>4</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 93; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207.

confirmation of the privilege for the Poles in 1460, when it becomes a taxing location for the cloth brought into Wallachia.<sup>6</sup>

The way the town name is first mentioned suggests that it originated in a group of Hungarian settlers arriving here when the area was under Hungarian control. In Hungarian, *Egydhalma* means “Egyd’s mound.”<sup>7</sup> The 1547 name of one inhabitant, Antal, and that of the *șoltuz* in 1580, Baloș, confirm that members of this community still lived in town in the 16th century.<sup>8</sup> Ilie Minea, Nicolae Grigoraș and others claimed that Adjud instances the Catholic custom of baptizing settlements with saint names, the name of St Aegidius being adopted here.<sup>9</sup> This has no support, since the town name was not preceded by “saint” (it was not called Szent-Egyd), as in Transylvania.<sup>10</sup> As in many other cases, only the name *Egyd—Egyed* was adopted, a Hungarian form of the mentioned saint name. Furthermore, persons bearing this name, a Transylvanian voivode included, feature in many Latin sources in Transylvania.<sup>11</sup> It was in Transylvania as well that we will find similar etymologies (Aiud is one example), and in Moldavia, Agiu-teni, in the county of Roman.<sup>12</sup>

Giurescu has claimed that Adjud was part of the Cumania bishopric in the 13th century.<sup>13</sup> Evidence backing this statement has yet to surface, since town documents are few and archaeological research has revealed nothing predating the 14th century. We also have no detail on the ethnic make-up and the way the community evolved until 1500. The grey ceramic uncovered here resembles the one in Suceava, Baia, Bacău, and Iași, where it is ascribed to Catholic settlers.<sup>14</sup> Brașov’s customs records make frequent reference to merchants from neighbouring Putna or Troțuș, whereas the ones from Adjud are altogether missing.<sup>15</sup> However, Adjud was seen as a town, since it had internal autonomy just like the other towns. The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* are mentioned

<sup>6</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>7</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 143, doc. 184.

<sup>9</sup> I. Minea, “Despre cel mai vechi nume al orașului Roman,” *Cercetări istorice* (Iași) vol. X–XII (1934–1936), pp. 346–348; Grigoraș, “Despre orașul,” pp. 85–87; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 184.

<sup>10</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 267, doc. 140.

<sup>11</sup> DRH, C, X, p. 48, doc. 53; p. 63, doc. 65; p. 81, doc. 80.

<sup>12</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 178 and 210, note 1.

<sup>13</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Artimon, *Civilizația medievală*, p. 160.

<sup>15</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 271–304.

only later, in 1580, but they definitely existed since former times.<sup>16</sup> A 1620 document contains the first known seal of the town, having as its emblem a cramp, a pliers, and three nails.<sup>17</sup> Crafts prevailed in this town, as confirmed by metal items discovered in the inventory of several dwellings investigated in Adjudul Vechi.<sup>18</sup> Adjud also hosted a county seat, but no data on the construction of a princely residence remains.<sup>19</sup>

The medieval town was abandoned by the end of the 18th century due to numerous landslides and flooding by the Siret river, but also because the road crossing the town changed its course. The new Adjud developed several kilometres south-west, further from the Siret and closer to the Trotuș (1795). Only the village of Adjudul Vechi lies where the medieval town once stood.<sup>20</sup> Archaeological research has only covered the western edge of the old town, the central and the eastern sides lying nowadays under the waters of the Siret.<sup>21</sup>

### *Bacău*

At a day's journey north of the Adjud, Bacău stands by a ford over the river Bistrița. Despite being a major hub in its day, sources documenting it are scarce. In the 1408 privilege, the customs house in Bacău is called “the customs house by the edge,” a phrase which received various interpretations.<sup>22</sup> Going by the theory that the border lay on the Trotuș river, Hasdeu believed this type of customs point to have been near the border.<sup>23</sup> He assumed that the Moldavian ruler had no control over the counties of Putna and Covurlui, noted by internal documents only late, after 1423.<sup>24</sup> Giurescu and others place the Wallachian boundary further south, on the Milcov river, with the customs house in Bacău considered the last place where southbound merchandise

<sup>16</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 143, doc. 184.

<sup>17</sup> Gh. Ghibănescu, “Ce-i cu zăpăsul românesc din 1523?,” *Arhiva din Iași* (Iași) vol. XV, no. 2 (1904), pp. 74–79; Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. II, p. 259, doc. 110.

<sup>18</sup> Artimon, *Civilizația medievală*, p. 161.

<sup>19</sup> DIR, XVI, A, p. 64, doc. 59; p. 196, doc. 173.

<sup>20</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 184.

<sup>21</sup> Artimon, *Civilizația medievală*, pp. 156–167.

<sup>22</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>23</sup> B. P. Hasdeu, *Istoria critică a românilor*, ed. Grigore Brâncuș (Bucharest, 1984), p. 13; Moldovanu, *Toponimia Moldovei*, p. XXX.

<sup>24</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 77, doc. 53.

was taxed.<sup>25</sup> We accept that “the customs house by the edge” (Old Slav. *krainee mîto*) indicates the final customs stop before the border. If the customs house was then on the river Milcov, there would be no less than 100 kilometres free of any customs duty (between Bacău and Milcov), an unlikely windfall in those days. What’s more, how is it that, 25 years after the above-cited privilege, the customs house in Adjud which shared the same road as Bacău is mentioned?<sup>26</sup>

There was definitely a link between Bacău and the other town on the river of Bistrița, Piatra lui Crăciun. One of them dominated the Bistrița valley before Moldavia emerged as a state, since no town in the surroundings met the conditions for a local ruler’s residence. Roman was founded by Roman I, Trotuș owes its creation to the salt mines, and Adjud develops after 1400. It is likely that the centre of authority in Piatra had dominated the area until Moldavia emerged, since it is mentioned in the Kiev list (in which Bacău is missing).<sup>27</sup> Instead, after mid 14th century, Bacău flourishes and goes on to become the prime centre of the area, around 1400. From Petru I to Alexandru the Good, Moldavia forges a more stable political and trade relation with Transylvania and Wallachia, allowing the settlement here to go through the final motions in its urbanization. Its location on the road linking Poland and Moldavia to Wallachia and southern Danube favoured this process. In the former half of the 15th century, a small residence is built in Bacău; here, Roman II and Ștefan the Great issue several documents.<sup>28</sup> Ștefan’s son and heir, Alexandru, rebuilt and extended the residence, erecting a new church within it (1491).<sup>29</sup> Alexandru issued a few documents here, a sign that he had been granted authority over this area.<sup>30</sup> Some villages clustered into an *ocol* supplied the household

<sup>25</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, p. 277; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 186; Virgil Ciocâltan, “Către “părțile tătărăști” din titlul voievodal al lui Mircea cel Bătrân,” *AIIAI*, vol. XXIV, no. 2 (1987), p. 349.

<sup>26</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 304, doc. 207; Moldovanu, *Toponimia Moldovei*, p. XXX.

<sup>27</sup> *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>28</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 393, doc. 283; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 257, doc. 123; DRH, A, II, p. 97, doc. 66; p. 147, doc. 104.

<sup>29</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 380; *Inscripțiile medievale*, p. 665, doc. 962; C. Nicolescu, “Arta în epoca lui Ștefan cel Mare,” in *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare*, ed. M. Berza (Bucharest, 1964), pp. 324–325; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Reperoriul bibliografic al localităților și monumentelor feudale din Moldova* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 39, 41; Alexandru Artimon, “Contribuții arheologice la istoria orașului Bacău,” *Carpica* (Bacău) vol. XIII (1981), pp. 16–20.

<sup>30</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 367, doc. CLXIV; p. 379, doc. CLXIX.

of the ruler in Bacău. From 1491, the ruler begins donating them to monasteries or boyars.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of the new town is not only evident in the existence of a small residence and a customs house, but also in the foundation of a Catholic bishopric here. In 1400, the *civitas Bachoviensis* already had a group of Hospitaller monks.<sup>32</sup> In a 1431 letter, John of Ryza, the Catholic bishop in Baia, confirms that Bacău was a *civitas*. Since the authors of this account were men of the Church, familiar with the diplomatic ways of the time, this clearly indicates a bishopric in Bacău.<sup>33</sup> A 1439 bull by Pope Eugene IV tells us that the bishopric had been created around 1391–1392, under Pope Boniface IX.<sup>34</sup> The founder of the Franciscan Church of the Holy Virgin in this town is believed to be one Margaret, most probably first consort to Alexandru the Good, and not Margaret, mother to Petru and Roman I, who was closer to the Dominicans.<sup>35</sup> The decision to found a Catholic bishopric in Bacău is probably explained by the large number of Catholics residing both in the town, and in the area. Those settled in the northern areas of the country already had the bishoprics in Siret and Baia, while those further south had the bishopric of Milcovia. The bishopric acted as a major component in urban life. Witness to this is the townspeople using an oval seal, following a pattern common in the Catholic Church. The community probably copied the impression of the local bishopric in its seal.<sup>36</sup>

Bacău's surroundings were an ethnic mix. Archaeological research shows groups of Hungarians from Transylvania (Germans as well, probably), who came to settle in town in the latter half of the 14th century, with some surface or semi-buried dwellings discovered near the future residence of the ruler.<sup>37</sup> We owe them the grey, stamped ceramics discovered here.<sup>38</sup> The Transylvanian influence is also noticeable

<sup>31</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 185, doc. 93; DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 205, doc. 215.

<sup>32</sup> Gorovei, "La începuturile," p. 279; p. 281, doc. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 64–65; Papacostea, "Știri noi," pp. 279–286.

<sup>34</sup> Gorovei, "La începuturile," pp. 270–283.

<sup>35</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 146; Rosetti, "Despre unguri," pp. 297–301; Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 121–123.

<sup>36</sup> Gorovei, "La începuturile," pp. 277–278.

<sup>37</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 119, doc. 84; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 38; Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 114–126, 134–144, 196–202; Artimon, *Civilizația medievală*, pp. 56–57.

<sup>38</sup> Artimon, "Contribuții arheologice," pp. 12–16.

in the town name, originating in a person's name, *Bako*.<sup>39</sup> In Transylvania, we will find more persons bearing this name, nobles included, like Bako, *iudices nobilium comitatus Albensis*.<sup>40</sup> Old Slavonic internal documents feature the town as *Bako*, *Bakova* or *Bakovia*.<sup>41</sup> A specific feature reminiscent of Baia or Troțuș was that the Bacău *șoltuz* had the right to sentence felons to death, at least for robberies.<sup>42</sup> This right was probably granted to the *șoltuz* and the community after 1350, when this land was under Hungarian influence.

All the above show that the town focused around the Catholic community ever since its first days. This community settled near a regular local market, which catered for the population on the lower reaches of the Bistrița. When settlers moved in, this temporary marketplace became a permanent one (the latter half of the 14th century). The town outline still has traces of the old central marketplace, that the main Catholic church (St Nicholas) towered over in its south part. A main street would cross this marketplace and the town, providing an avenue between two other landmarks, the ruler's residence (further south) and the church bishopric (Ascension of the Holy Virgin, further north).<sup>43</sup>

The Hungarians were joined by Romanians who, since arriving from "Hungarian" lands, were called *ungurenî*, to distinguish them from Hungarians proper (Rom. *unguri*). The *ungurenî* in Bacău are certified ever since 1409, when a village by this name is donated to a boyar with the same origin, Giurgiu *Ungureanul*.<sup>44</sup> From the 15th century on, the Romanians begin populating the area north of the marketplace, where they built a church after 1500.<sup>45</sup>

Marco Bandini relates that, because of the large Hungarian segment in the town, the *șoltuz* was elected among Hungarians one year, and another, among Romanians.<sup>46</sup> Where early times are concerned,

<sup>39</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 117, doc. CCXI; DRH, A, I, p. 34, doc. 24; p. 195, doc. 141; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 187.

<sup>40</sup> *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen im Siebenbürgen*, vol. 2, eds. Franz Zimmermann, Carl Werner, Georg Müller (Sibiu, 1897), p. 135, doc. 716; p. 293, doc. 897; DRH, C, XI, p. 97, doc. 94, D, I, p. 58, doc. 30.

<sup>41</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 117, doc. CCXI; DRH, A, I, p. 34, doc. 24; p. 195, doc. 141; II, p. 97, doc. 66; p. 147, doc. 104.

<sup>42</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. XVI, p. 33, doc. 49.

<sup>43</sup> Gr. Grigorovici, *Bacăul din trecut și de azi* (Bacău, 1939), p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 34, doc. 24; p. 259, doc. 183.

<sup>45</sup> Artimon, "Contribuții arheologice," pp. 20–24.

<sup>46</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 174.

we believe that the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* were elected only among colonists. Later on, as the Romanians multiplied, a compromise was reached and it was decided that town leadership should not be restricted to one group. The same is with Huși, Cluj or Buda.<sup>47</sup> Judging by his name, the first known *șoltuz* is not Romanian: Sascău Frâncu (1602).<sup>48</sup> The name of most of the 12 *pârgari* mentioned in 1655 was not Romanian, indicating that most inhabitants were still Hungarian at that point.<sup>49</sup> Even though the Catholic bishopric had no official serving it after mid 15th century and in the next, its church was still active and was used by the Franciscans.<sup>50</sup> It was barely in 1591 that Bernardino Quirini was appointed bishop of Argeș, but with a right of residing in the Bacău seat. From 1607 on, the two bishoprics were practically merged, the Argeș seat being forever abandoned for the one in Bacău, the only one still active in the entire Moldavia.<sup>51</sup>

Judges are representatives of the ruler, and their abuses were the stuff of many complaints by Brașov merchants, ever since 1435. Their authority extended over the neighbouring county of Roman, where such officials were not set up.<sup>52</sup> They were later replaced by the *ure-adnici*.<sup>53</sup> Of the medieval town, modern eyes can only see the ruler's church, the ruins of his residence (laid to waste and abandoned after 1500) and the central outline, by and large. The main reason behind this: fire and destruction, on as many occasions as foreign attacks (1467, 1476, 1538), which took their toll on the development of the town.<sup>54</sup> The town economy also suffered greatly. The customs records in Brașov show that, after 1500, few merchants in Bacău would cross into Transylvania, and the merchandise they brought had no particularly high value.<sup>55</sup> The income derived from the customs house in town was donated to the monastery of Bistrița, as was the *camena* and the mills in the northern parts of the town.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 92; Rűsz-Fogarasi, *Privilegiile*, pp. 88–89.

<sup>48</sup> DIR, XVII, A, I, p. 53, doc. 81.

<sup>49</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. IV, p. 290, doc. 255.

<sup>50</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. IV, pp. 36–37, 51; vol. V, pp. 96, 177–178; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 174.

<sup>51</sup> Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, pp. 90–91, doc. XCI–XCIII.

<sup>52</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 195, doc. 141; II, p. 119, doc. 84.

<sup>53</sup> DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 205, doc. 215.

<sup>54</sup> Al. I. Gonța, “Strategia lui Ștefan cel Mare în bătălia de la Baia (1467),” *SRDI*, vol. XX, no. 6 (1967), p. 1132; Artimon, “Contribuții arheologice,” p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 261–295.

<sup>56</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 283, doc. 200; II, p. 94, doc. 65.



*Baia*

Baia is one of the oldest and most compelling towns in Moldavia. It is one of the few where more in-depth archaeological research was undertaken, which, although falling short of covering the entire medieval town, provides relevant data on its early days. A settlement existed here ever since the 13th century. The varied inventory uncovered, with ceramic items in Byzantine fashion within it, shows the dwellers to have been actively engaged in trade relations over great distances. The settlement took advantage of the landscape, lying on the Moldova river valley, and acting as a middle point on the road linking Moldavia and Transylvania. The first record of the town is the catalyst of much debate. In 1334, a Lviv document mentions one Allexandro Moldaowicz, a name reminiscent of both the *târg* of Moldavia (future Baia),<sup>57</sup> but also of a settlement called Młoda, in Poland.<sup>58</sup> Since this record was too early, when Moldavia did not even exist as a state, and Baia was still not a town, it probably referred to the Polish settlement.<sup>59</sup> Another controversy erupted over whether Baia had or had no fortress. This claim is supported by Constantin C. Giurescu, who relied on the existence of a hill called Cetățuia (small fortress) near the town.<sup>60</sup> Until now, archaeological investigation has revealed no fortress nearby.<sup>61</sup>

It was through Baia that the armies of King Louis of Hungary crossed when subjecting this region (c. 1345–1347). A violent conquest would account for the traces of fire discovered by archaeologists and dated mid 14th century, as well as for the interruption in trade exchanges with southern areas.<sup>62</sup> Its status of major settlement, residence to a local ruler, which bowed before the armies of the Hungarian king, was also noted by the local historical tradition: the first few chroniclers place the first Moldavian residence here. However, Baia was at best an interim residence, since the new rulers settled in Siret. Baia was not even the residence of a county, and, if ever such a county existed, it disappeared before or once Bogdan I conquered the land.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 190; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 56, 265–266.

<sup>58</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>59</sup> Moldovanu, *Toponimia Moldovei*, pp. XXX, L.

<sup>60</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 192.

<sup>61</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 153–154.

<sup>62</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 22, 101–102; vol. 2, pp. 16, 245.

<sup>63</sup> Gorovei, “Istoria în palimpsest,” p. 172.

Sources suggest that the town held special status, due to some settlers moving in from Transylvania after the Hungarian conquest.<sup>64</sup> The envoys of the king and the colonists orchestrated the emergence and the urbanization of a new settlement, as the old chronicles note as well: “Voivode Dragoș founded the first town on the Moldova river” (*Cronica moldo-rusă*); “the *târg* in Baia was said to be founded by some Saxon potters” (Ureche’s chronicle).<sup>65</sup> The *hospites* were settled, as we had already pointed out in a previous chapter, as a typical *locatio*. Despite being adopted from the locals, the area where settlers were placed was systematically reorganized. A wooden church was built and a central marketplace was outlined; on its sides, tracts of land were parcelled out, and were denser here than on secondary streets.<sup>66</sup> After 1400, the inhabitants reached a standard of living close to that in Transylvania. Houses were warmed by tile stoves, and the marketplace and the roads in town were paved with river gravel.<sup>67</sup> A wood palisade was erected around the settlement, only to be torn down during the 1467 battle waged here. Unfortunately, in modern times, the settlement entered a rural trend, which led to the medieval street network being largely compromised by new dwellings.<sup>68</sup>

We have no statistics on the percentage of various ethnic categories within the town. It is likely that most inhabitants were initially German, since “the Saxons in Baia” are mentioned on several occasions in 15th century documents.<sup>69</sup> This type of ethnic reference in formal papers is unique in Moldavia, since in all other instances, rulers addressed the townspeople without any reference to ethnicity, but only to social status. Ordinances were aimed at townspeople or their representatives, and not at the ethnic groups in the community. Since rulers sometimes note the *șoltuzes* in Baia and the Saxons here in the same document, the latter group were probably the town community at that point, holding separate status, as opposed to other townspeople in Moldavia.

<sup>64</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 40–42.

<sup>65</sup> *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 156, 160; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 65.

<sup>66</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 156; vol. 2, pp. 40–42, 46–47; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 153–154, 164.

<sup>67</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 36–37; 128–139; vol. 2, pp. 45–46.

<sup>68</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 118–119, 152–153.

<sup>69</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 34, doc. 26; p. 57, doc. 41.

Another feature has to do with property over mills. Whereas other Moldavian towns only relay data on the individual property of mills, the townspeople of Baia feature as collective owners for them. In 1443, we will find the town *pârgari* in control of two mills, together with the monks in Moldovița.<sup>70</sup> Ten years later, other monks from the monastery of Probota, receive, “by will of the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* in Baia,” the right to annually levy an amount of malt and wheat from the town mills. This document makes explicit reference to the “bargaining” at hand, proof that the two parties negotiated, the town dwellers being also acknowledged as the “Saxons in Baia.”<sup>71</sup>

The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* were elected among the Saxons, whom German and Latin documents refer to as *Richter*, *Graff*, *advocatus*, *iudex*, and *burger*, *consules*, respectively.<sup>72</sup> Their privilege probably had a provision which allowed them to consent to or reject access to new members in the community, allowing them to keep Romanian and other representatives at bay for a while. Only this can clarify the absence of Armenians, who settled in almost all Moldavian towns in the same time with the Saxons. They will not be found in Baia too, probably since Saxon leaders attempted to avoid their competition (Armenians were seen as consummate traders). This changes over the 15th century, when more and more Romanians find their way into the community. Of the 12 *pârgari* in a 1586 document, only half still bear German or Hungarian names, the name of the *șoltuz* being Romanian.<sup>73</sup>

The Saxon privilege in Baia was among the most extended in Moldavia. The town leader enjoyed special influence, specifically the right to try grievous crimes and to sentence to death, a situation that, until now, has only been present in some other towns, all west of the Siret river.<sup>74</sup> Another feature was that no judges appointed by the prince can be found in this town. Why was the privilege of Baia Saxons more generous than that in other Moldavian towns? The early days of the town hold the answer to this. Archaeological research confirms the presence of Germans here, ever since c. 1350, before the Moldavia principality actually emerged. Since the right to pass capital pun-

<sup>70</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 343, doc. 242.

<sup>71</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 34, doc. 26.

<sup>72</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. LIV; DH, vol. XV, part I, p. 158, doc. 239; p. 203, doc. 366.

<sup>73</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 310, doc. 376.

<sup>74</sup> Bălan, *Documente bucovinene*, vol. II, pp. 163–164, doc. 87.

ishment was shared by other towns in the Hungarian Kingdom, the privilege-granter for the settlers in Baia was most likely King Louis.<sup>75</sup> Another argument is provided by the emblem in the town seal, a severed stag head with a crucifix between the horns, a symbol of St Hubert. This seal is believed to have predated Moldavia's emblem, and the Hungarian king was also probably the one responsible for the act.<sup>76</sup> When the new Moldavian rulers took over this land, they only acknowledged both the privilege, and the seal. The substantial settler community here deterred the rulers from setting up residence in Baia; they issued no documents from there.<sup>77</sup> A late event, over one century after the town was built, suggests the existence of traditional relations between the community here and the Hungarian kings. In 1467, Matthias Corvinus sets off on an expedition against Ștefan the Great, discontent (among others) at the latter's attacks in Transylvania and at the recent conquest of the stronghold at Kilia, which had been subordinated to Hungary until then (1465). After entering Moldavia through Oituz and Trotuș, the king makes headway towards Suceava. He sets fire to all towns in his path, Trotuș, Bacău, Roman, and Neamț, but spares Baia. Instead, Matthias chooses to settle here, in a stone house in the centre of the town, which was fortified to prevent an attack by Ștefan. This would occur in the night between the 14th and the 15th of December, and leads to a fire.<sup>78</sup> The king chose this town by no vagary of chance. Matthias came here also because he sought the help of the townspeople in Baia, who could have supported him on account of the traditional links between the community and Transylvania, but also in memory of the Hungarian king granting them the privilege one hundred years before. Baia was at the same time a symbol of the rights held by the Hungarian crown over Moldavia.<sup>79</sup>

The first Catholic church in town was wooden and was located where the modern-day church of St Mary would be erected, one of

<sup>75</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, pp. 19–20; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 112–113, 251–252.

<sup>76</sup> Vîrtosu, "Din sigilografia," pp. 459–460; 466–467; Möhlenkamp, "Die ältesten Siegel," pp. 346–352.

<sup>77</sup> In the 14th–16th centuries, only one document was issued in Baia (DRH, A, I, p. 61, doc. 42).

<sup>78</sup> Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, tom IV, eds. I. Fögel, B. Iványi, L. Juhász (Budapest, 1941), pp. 16–17; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 85; Gonța, "Strategia lui Ștefan," pp. 1128–1137.

<sup>79</sup> See also Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, "Princeps omni laude maior". *O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Putna, 2005), pp. 62–63.

the largest in Moldavia.<sup>80</sup> The tombstones inside and in the cemetery around it shows that many well-to-do townspeople were interred there.<sup>81</sup> The Catholic missionaries visiting Baia in the 17th century (Bartolomeo Bassetti, Marco Bandini), found an inscription that points to the church being erected in 1410 by Alexandru the Good in memory of Margaret, called *conjux* (consort), and who was buried within the church. She was the less-known first wife of Alexandru, a Catholic.<sup>82</sup> Another Catholic church devoted to the Holy Trinity was lost to one of the fires that ravaged the town, its traces still undiscovered to this day.<sup>83</sup> The last known Catholic church, with St Peter as its patron, was on the western border of the town. A monastery was later built here.<sup>84</sup> The Catholics in the area had a bishopric built for them. Its first bishop was John of Ryza, formally appointed bishop between 1413 and 1420.<sup>85</sup> The Hussite movement also influenced the Baia inhabitants. Jacob, a Hussite, had settled here and began challenging John of Ryza, who made unsuccessful complaints to Alexandru the Good.<sup>86</sup> A copper fibula uncovered in the town bears an inscription indicative of the religious debates led here in the former half of the 15th century: *H(err) x Ivo x (und) Ot(t)o x Meid(et) x Abg(ötter)* (*Oh Lord, save Ivo and Otto, strayed from your path*).<sup>87</sup> These debates paved the way to the Reform, which won over the entire Catholic population in town in the 16th century.

The Saxons occupied the centre of the town and the main marketplace, while the Romanians moved towards the outskirts, flanking the Saxons. In each of their neighbourhoods, the Romanians built churches. The excavations in the western area evidenced early habitation, even since the 13th century, and it was probably here that the Romanians

<sup>80</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 210; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 164.

<sup>81</sup> Lapedatu, “Antichitățile,” p. 61; N. Iorga, “Pietrele de mormânt ale sașilor de la Baia,” *BCMI*, vol. XXIV (1931), pp. 1–6; *Inscripțiile medievale*, pp. 502–505, doc. 608–611; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 165–166.

<sup>82</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 470, doc. CCCLXXXVIII; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 182; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 212.

<sup>83</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 164.

<sup>84</sup> Mentioned in 1420 (Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, p. 36, doc. 21); *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 183; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 212.

<sup>85</sup> Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, p. 28, doc. 16; pp. 34–36, doc. 20–21; C. Auner, “Episcopia de Baia,” *RC*, vol. IV (1915), pp. 94–101.

<sup>86</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 64–65; Papacostea, “Știri noi,” pp. 279–286.

<sup>87</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 2, p. 120.

fell back after the Saxons arrived.<sup>88</sup> The presence of an Orthodox priest in Baia, in 1499, shows that the Romanians certainly had at least one church at the time.<sup>89</sup> Another Romanian neighbourhood was south-east. Here, Petru Rareș built another Orthodox church (1532).

In 1415, the Constance council also has as its attendants the delegates from *Ieszmarckt* (Iași) and *Molga* (Molda—Baia), to which the author of the testimony adds the phrase *di zwu seind philistei*, meaning “where Philistines live.”<sup>90</sup> The name “Philistines” was attached in some Polish and Hungarian sources to the *Jassi*, an Alan people, who probably lived in Baia before the medieval town emerged. They were probably subordinated to the Mongols, who sought to control by their proxy this part of Moldavia.<sup>91</sup> While we have no details on this population, we do know that a group of Mongol slaves was settled near town.<sup>92</sup> They were under less pressure, since they are recorded as dealing in trade in 1454.<sup>93</sup>

Another controversy has to do with the town name, which has yet to receive a satisfactory interpretation. Documents note it either as Baia, or as Mulda/Molde (Germ. for Moldavia). The former name is used in Slavonic documents, while the latter, in German or Latin papers issued by the Saxons.<sup>94</sup> Based on this, Vasile Neamțu claimed that Baia is the ancient name of the town, while Mulda was later introduced by the newcomers, who took over the local name of the river where the town was.<sup>95</sup> The name of Baia comes from the Hungarian *bánya*—“mine”. Since the name *banja* is also present in the South-Slavonic area, a Slavonic origin was also claimed.<sup>96</sup> In this instance, the word was adopted in its meaning of “mine,” and was used throughout the area under the influence of the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>97</sup> The problem

<sup>88</sup> N. Zaharia, Petrescu-Dimbovița, E. Zaharia, *Așezări din Moldova*, p. 307.

<sup>89</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 419, doc. 236.

<sup>90</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” pp. 70, 82–83.

<sup>91</sup> Ciocâltan, “Alanii,” pp. 941–945; Möhlenkamp, “Contribuții,” pp. 65–66.

<sup>92</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 23, doc. 16.

<sup>93</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>94</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. 54; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 78, doc. 85; p. 158, doc. 239.

<sup>95</sup> Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 34; Dragoș Moldovanu, “Ipoteza originii săsești a numelui Moldova,” in *Studii de onomastică*, vol. III, eds. Ioan Pătruț et al. (Cluj, 1982), pp. 144–183.

<sup>96</sup> *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom I, part I, pp. 431–432; Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 52; E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> Virtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 474–475; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 189–190; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 241–242.

is that, up to now, no mine has been uncovered near the town of Baia. Archaeological research have identified traces of coal and iron slag, but only for the period before mid 14th century, when settlers began moving in.<sup>98</sup> The data we have indicate that mining was short-lived.<sup>99</sup> More numerous are the items specific to pouring molten metal, probably used to make copper, which would indicate that this metal prevailed over iron. We do not know where the ore used in the manufacture was brought from. The Moldova river valley has resources of non-ferrous metal, including copper, so the search for a mining centre in the area must not be abandoned.<sup>100</sup> A 1448 document deepens the mystery surrounding it, since it mentions the *stupe*, mills where ore was washed and crushed.<sup>101</sup>

Despite their inability to show whether and where mining was carried out in the area, archaeological research did indicate that craftsmen existed here. A neighbourhood with potters existed in the western area of the town, and another one, specialized in crafts, was located in the southern parts.<sup>102</sup> Town documents mention trading, above all. A part of the correspondence between the *șoltușezes* in Baia and those in Bistrița has been preserved; the latter were close trade partners for the town.<sup>103</sup> The customs records in Brașov also note many merchants from Baia. In 1503, Baia was second only to Suceava where the value of merchandise in Brașov was concerned, and it even holds first place in 1529–1530.<sup>104</sup>

A description of the 1467 campaign provides some details on the town, the only ones in our period of interest. Antonius de Bonfinis, who relied on a testimony by an eye witness, describes the main mar-

<sup>98</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>99</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 50–52; vol. 2, pp. 59–62.

<sup>100</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 49, 78–84; vol. 2, pp. 112–115.

<sup>101</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 395, doc. 279; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 194; Nicolae Maghiar, Ștefan Olteanu, *Din istoria mineritului în România* (Bucharest, 1970), pp. 128–129; Neamțu, *Istoria orașului*, p. 92. Such *stupe* endured in Slovakian mines until modern times (details in Eva Kralova, Olga Klakova, Lubica Durisova, *Traces of Industrial Heritage in Slovakia—Forgotten Treasures of Land and Human Spirit*, pp. 3–4, The XIII Congress of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage, Terni, Italy, 14–18 September 2006, <http://www.ticcihcongress2006.net/paper/Paper%201/kralova-.pdf> (25 May 2008).

<sup>102</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, p. 37.

<sup>103</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 78, doc. 135–136; p. 158, doc. 239.

<sup>104</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 261.

ketplace (*forum*), wooden fortifications, the gates, as well as the town houses, most built out of wood. The king set up his camp in town and was supposedly accommodated in a stone building in the marketplace, near the church of the Catholic bishopric. Ștefan the Great's attack led to an almost complete destruction of the town,<sup>105</sup> triggering a rearrangement in the settlement outline, with one part abandoned, probably since it was not worth restoring.<sup>106</sup>

The town was in its prime in late 14th century, and all through the 15th. The grand merchants of Baia are mentioned in all the great towns around, especially in Brașov, Bistrița, and Lviv. They had such close relations, that some inhabitants preferred leaving them one part of their possessions. In 1400, Nicolas Hecht from Baia decided that the debt still not paid him in Lviv were to be left to this town. Hecht's inheritors were wealthy people, like Iakusch Weber, *pârgar*, and tailors Iust and Merten.<sup>107</sup> The town's name had reached abroad, witness its presence as *Moldavia* on the map of Central and Eastern Europe by Nicolaus Cusanus (in the 1491 copy).<sup>108</sup> Baia begins its decline after the onset of the Reform and after persecutions in mid 16th century. The Catholics switched to Protestantism, the last Catholic bishop in Baia being mentioned in 1523.<sup>109</sup> Suceava's competition, and the ever-increasing weight that the monks in Moldovița carried in town gradually diminished the importance of the town, now a simple village.

### *Bârlad*

Bârlad is located on the right bank of the river by the same name, near an important ford. Archaeological findings show that this place had been permanently inhabited since prehistoric times, but a town only emerged around 1400.<sup>110</sup> The name of the settlement was the subject of much academic controversy, without any agreement on its origin. A *târg* by the name of *Berlad* features in *Cronica Ipatievskaiia*, in

<sup>105</sup> Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum*, tom IV, pp. 16–17; Gonța, “Strategia lui Ștefan,” pp. 1133–1137.

<sup>106</sup> E. Neamțu, V. Neamțu, Cheptea, *Orașul medieval Baia*, vol. 1, pp. 37–38; vol. 2, p. 247.

<sup>107</sup> *Akta grodzkie*, tom IV, p. 108, doc. 54.

<sup>108</sup> Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria*, vol. I, pp. 92–96; vol. II, map 35.

<sup>109</sup> Auner, *Episcopia de Baia*, p. 126.

<sup>110</sup> Spinci, “Inceputurile vieții urbane,” pp. 279–280.



the 12th century. While influenced by a document that Hasdeu published in the 19th century, many historians attempted to link this *târg*, the *berladnics*, and the town of Bârlad in Moldavia. The *berladnics* were in turn considered Romanian, Russian, or of mixed origins.<sup>111</sup> Ioan Bogdan has proved that the paper Hasdeu published was a forgery, so this theory can be discarded.<sup>112</sup> The same as Siret and Suceava, the town of Bârlad borrowed its name from the river it stands over, but we cannot make any further claims without venturing on the shifting sands of speculation. What we may say for certain is that, ever since the end of the 13th century in Bârlad, in the place called Prodana, a major settlement existed. Dwellings, ceramics, items of metal, clay and bone were discovered here, and even an oven for the reduction of iron ore, indicating the presence of artisans. This settlement did not endure, since it was located on several bank ridges, in an area prone to flooding. It was only after the Mongols were chased out, in the seventh decade of the 14th century, that the core of the inhabited area moved on where the present town exists.<sup>113</sup>

It is hard to say whether the residence of a local ruler existed in Bârlad. Later sources place the residence of the *vornic* in the Lower Country here.<sup>114</sup> A stronghold was discovered, further away from town, fortified by an earth mound, a wood palisade and a moat of around 35 metres.<sup>115</sup> Archaeologists working here date it to later times, the latter half of the 15th century (c. 1475–1476), and believe its existence was very short.<sup>116</sup> Even so, the wealth of archaeological material discovered does not make allowance for less than one decade.<sup>117</sup> It was probably active all through the 15th century, and was burnt down. The seat of the *vornic* was more likely in town, in a residence from which rul-

<sup>111</sup> Spinei, “Începuturile vieții urbane,” pp. 275–277.

<sup>112</sup> Ioan Bogdan, “Diploma bârlădeană din 1134 și principatul Bârladului. O încercare de critică diplomatică slavo-română,” in *Scrieri alese*, ed. G. Mihăilă (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 112–145; Spinei, “Începuturile vieții urbane,” pp. 273–283; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 177–179.

<sup>113</sup> Spinei, “Începuturile vieții urbane,” pp. 286–287.

<sup>114</sup> *Croniclele slavo-române*, p. 176, 186; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 70; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 155, 240.

<sup>115</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 106; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 155–156.

<sup>116</sup> Mircea D. Matei, “Date noi în legătură cu cetatea de pământ de la Bârlad,” *SCIV*, vol. X, no. 1 (1959), pp. 117–134; Mircea D. Matei, Lucian Chițescu, *Cetatea de pământ de la Bârlad. Monografie arheologică* (Târgoviște, 2002), pp. 148–160.

<sup>117</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu, review of Mircea D. Matei, Lucian Chițescu, *Cetatea de pământ de la Bârlad. Monografie arheologică* (Târgoviște, 2002), *AM*, vol. 29 (2006), pp. 308–312.

ers issued several documents (1441–1442, 1460, 1467).<sup>118</sup> This building was located where prince Vasile Lupu rebuilds the Church of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin, that is traditionally ascribed to Ștefan the Great.<sup>119</sup> A 1851 map shows that the church had a distinct plot of land in town, north-west of the central area, on the road coming from Roman. This road advanced towards Fălciu, so the outline of the medieval town followed the West-East axis.<sup>120</sup>

Bârlad's urban dawn dates back to the end of the 14th century. The 1408 trade privilege features the settlement as a customs point close to the border of the country. One provision refers to taxing the fish brought through here by the Poles from Brăila.<sup>121</sup> This provision is no accident, since the fish trade and the rest of the merchandise brought decent income to the ruler and to the town inhabitants. Wishing to spur on the development of the town, Alexandru the Good granted the inhabitants an exemption from the lesser customs duty, noted in the town privilege as well. This document was not kept in its original form, but only as a partial renewal in c. 1494–1495. The prince kept a symbolic tax for himself (one fish per cartload), reminding the townspeople that he was the lord, and that the town owes its beginning to him.<sup>122</sup> The importance of fish trade in Bârlad was symbolically marked by including three fish in the town seal. The other symbol in the town seal, a sun, only hardly lends itself to interpretation. Since it was the mid-point, the sun probably indicates an older age for the settlement, with the fish added (placed around) being a symbolic nod to the privilege received.<sup>123</sup> The 1494–1495 renewal states that the privilege was granted to the “townspeople” of the “town” of Bârlad, both notions being referred to by *miasto*, and not the Slavonic *târg*. The term *miasto* must be related to the settler community present in Bârlad. They were probably brought by the same Alexandru the Good, who granted them rights. Saxons, Hungarians, and Armenians were among them. At the end of the 16th century, when the first information on Catholics transpires, this community was dwindling, but was

<sup>118</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 299, doc. 213; p. 311, doc. 221; II, p. 138, doc. 97; p. 213, doc. 147.

<sup>119</sup> Ioan Antonovici, *Documente bârlădene*, vol. I (Bârlad, 1911), p. 1, doc. 1; Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 84.

<sup>120</sup> Antonovici, *Documente bârlădene*, vol. I, attached map.

<sup>121</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>122</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151.

<sup>123</sup> Antonovici, *Documente bârlădene*, vol. IV, attached image; Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” p. 477.

still large when compared to other southern-Moldavian towns.<sup>124</sup> The first inhabitants of the town definitely included some Romanians too. A priest with a Romanian name is mentioned in a 1444 document.<sup>125</sup> Alexandru the Good also granted the inhabitants right to use over the vast domain of the town; its diameter ranged from 10 to 18 km.<sup>126</sup>

Bârlad is noted in the 1412 treaty in Lublau, concluded between the Hungarian and Polish kings. If Moldavia was to be divided, Bârlad would fall to King Sigismund of Hungary. The phrase *forum seu villa Berlam* in the treaty shows that the authors were not sure whether this was a village or a town. Still, its mentioning in the document shows that Bârlad was already a landmark, a noteworthy settlement.<sup>127</sup> The presence of delegates from Bârlad (*Burlat*) at the Constance council proves that a town was already active here; mere villagers would not have been allowed at such an event.<sup>128</sup> The final confirmation lies in the rather early mention of the town *şoltuz*, who discussed legal matters with the judge in Braşov, in 1434.<sup>129</sup>

The first known official in town, representing the ruler, was a certain Negru from Bârlad, who features among the grand boyar witnesses of a 1401 document.<sup>130</sup> In 1435, Bârlad enters, along with the southeastern areas of the country, under Ştefan II's control, after the division of land between him and his brother, Ilie.<sup>131</sup> Information on the town and its inhabitants is scattered over sources. In 1440, it was set on fire by the Mongols, and, in 1473 and 1475, the Wallachians and the Ottomans followed suit when advancing against Ştefan the Great through this area.<sup>132</sup> In the 16th century, as Catholics decrease in numbers, the Greek multiply. The first Greek is mentioned in 1546.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>124</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, pp. 179–180, 227–228, 280; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 104.

<sup>125</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 351, doc. 248.

<sup>126</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan*, vol. II, p. 65.

<sup>127</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 483, doc. CCCC1.

<sup>128</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” pp. 70–71, 82–83.

<sup>129</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 309, doc. 210.

<sup>130</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 18, doc. 13.

<sup>131</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>132</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 6, 15, 17–18, 32–33.

<sup>133</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 466, doc. 422.

*Botoșani*

The first information on Botoșani dates back to 1439, when one chronicle makes the following cursory statement: “the Mongols came and pillaged all the way to Botușani”.<sup>134</sup> It is hard to believe that the scribe recording the event would have gone to the extent of mentioning a simple village. From this point on, the settlement is absent in sources, only to come to be mentioned during the conflicts between Moldavia and Poland in early 16th century. In 1500, a battle is waged near town, with the Moldavians as winners, in 1505, 1509, and during the first reign of Petru Rareș (1527–1538), the town is pillaged and set fire to by the Poles.<sup>135</sup> Petru Rareș’s reign also provides us its first mention as an *oppidum* (1528).<sup>136</sup> The poor state of sources is compounded by the scarcity of archaeological excavations. All these show that the settlement does not display the features of a fully-fledged town in the 15th century. Still, the density of dwellings, the ceramics and coins found indicate at least a pre-urban settlement. The gray ceramics discovered, although in fewer amounts than the red local ceramics, shows that a group of outsiders had also come into town.<sup>137</sup>

The location of Botoșani on a byroad of the “Moldavian road” which linked Iași to Hotin (via Hârlău and Dorohoi), had its say in the economic development of the settlement. A group of settlers probably populated the area in the latter half of the 14th century. The origin of the town name lies in the name Botăș or Botoș, probably that of the founder or the first owner of the settlement. Giurescu believes it to be a Romanian name, despite its obvious Hungarian root, which would probably be explained by the fact that the creator of the settlement arrived from Transylvania. The importance of colonists in the early days of the town is also divulged by the presence of the word *miasto* in the seal’s legend.<sup>138</sup> We have no specific data on the Hungarians or Germans in Botoșani. Future information reveals that the Armenian

<sup>134</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 6, 15.

<sup>135</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 78, 91; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 108, 127, 130, 142.

<sup>136</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. V, p. 650.

<sup>137</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2002* (Bucharest, 2003), pp. 57–60.

<sup>138</sup> Ciurea, “Sigiliile medievale,” p. 162, fig. 12.

community was substantial.<sup>139</sup> Local tradition places the building of the first Armenian church in 1350.<sup>140</sup> This year is not certified, but the arrival of this community in the latter half of the 14th century or in the 15th is possible, following a pattern present in Suceava or Cetatea Albă. Another argument supporting the long-running existence of this community is the fact that, until modern times, a part of the centre of the settlement was occupied by the Armenians.<sup>141</sup> A 1579 document mentions the fair held in Botoșani, believed to be one of the oldest in Moldavia. Its early stage may have lasted at least one century.<sup>142</sup> Even though the goods sold here were taxed according to custom, the rulers did not set up a customs house for foreign merchants in Botoșani. They did not do so in any town in the Hârlău county.

Fortunately, the lack of documents and archaeological research is made up for by an excellent case study in medieval topography by Eugenia Greceanu. She has identified the perimeter of the medieval town (*Târgul Vechi*) and the related street network, well preserved until the massive changes brought by Communist times. Street direction was influenced by roads entering town from several directions, emphasizing the importance of the trade function ascribed to the town by its location at a major crossroads. In the central area, a marketplace emerged (near the church of St George), where stores and stone cellars clustered. A second market would appear near the church of Uspenia in the 16th century. The place for the fair was north of the town and was later called *Târgul Vitelor* (The Cattle Market).<sup>143</sup> The Armenians had their neighbourhood near the central marketplace, further south, the rest of the town being inhabited by the Romanians (the place taken by Saxons and Hungarians cannot be determined).<sup>144</sup>

One of Moldavia's rulers erected here a residence, probably rebuilt by Ștefan the Great, together with the church of St Nicholas in Popăuți (1496). Unlike other towns, the residence was erected far beyond the area of the medieval town. Its role in urban genesis is therefore hard to trace down. The numerous fragments of ceramic in the 14th–16th

<sup>139</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part II, p. 21, doc. 290.

<sup>140</sup> Siruni, "Bisericile armenie," pp. 491–493.

<sup>141</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 203; Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire*, pp. 39–40; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 338, doc. 146.

<sup>142</sup> Hasdeu, *Arhiva istorică*, tom I, part I, p. 172, doc. 255.

<sup>143</sup> Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Botoșani*, pp. 44–57, fig. 10; Artur Gorovei, *Monografia orașului Botoșani*, 2nd ed. (Botoșani, 1938), pp. 292–295.

<sup>144</sup> Greceanu, *Ansamblul urban medieval Botoșani*, pp. 60–61.

centuries found here indicated a cluster of dwellings, hence another settlement.<sup>145</sup> Unlike other towns in the country, Botoșani had a special situation: it was the appanage for the ruler's consort.<sup>146</sup> The moment this decision was made is unknown; it was probably taken in the 15th century, when the main residence of the country was in Suceava, only a day's trip from Botoșani. The consorts did not have their residence here, but only left officials collecting the common taxes paid by the townspeople.<sup>147</sup> The earliest data on the relations between a lady and a town comes from the reign of Petru Rareș. His wife, Elena, erected in Botoșani while regent to her underage sons, no less than two churches, St George and Uspenia (1551–1552).<sup>148</sup> The town was the appanage of the consort until 1828.<sup>149</sup> The community held the same rights as the other communities of its kind did in the country. It elected a *șoltuz* and *pângari*, whose presence in documents, like that of officials for the lady, is recorded barely from the 17th century on.<sup>150</sup> Their absence in former times is explained by the disappearance of town documents, due to wars. In the Middle Ages, Botoșani was not a county residence, but was part of the county of Hârlău.

### *Cernăuți*

The dawn and the growth of this town through the Middle Ages are murky. For a while, it was believed that the Cerna in the Kiev list is a reference to Cernăuți.<sup>151</sup> Further on, when approaching the town of Cetatea Albă, we will show this to be another settlement, on the Dniester mouth, and not Cernăuți. Instead, the list mentions a stronghold in the northern area, Țețina.<sup>152</sup> The stronghold bearing this name was part of the fortification system for the Land of Șepeniț, being ruled by Poland and Moldavia alternatively.<sup>153</sup> A 1395 document confirms

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<sup>145</sup> N. Zaharia, Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Em. Zaharia, *Așezări din Moldova*, pp. 229–230; *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Botoșani*, vol. I, eds. Alexandru Păunescu, Paul Șadurschi, Vasile Chirica (Bucharest, 1976), p. 50.

<sup>146</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 160.

<sup>147</sup> Ifîimi, "Apanaje," pp. 7–10.

<sup>148</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, pp. 110–111.

<sup>149</sup> Ifîimi, "Apanaje," p. 10.

<sup>150</sup> DIR, XVII, A, I, p. 139, doc. 200; II, p. 251, doc. 324.

<sup>151</sup> Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, p. 24; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 72, 205–206.

<sup>152</sup> *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>153</sup> Andronic, "Orașe moldovenești," p. 214.

it had come under Moldavian rule, together with the stronghold at Hmielov.<sup>154</sup> In 1401 and 1404, Hotco from Țețina also features among Alexandru the Good's boyars, being probably the official appointed here by the prince.<sup>155</sup> In 1433, King Władysław Jagiełło acknowledges for Ștefan II rule over Țețina, only to have Ilie I transfer it to Poland along with the Șepeniț three years later, as reimbursement for damages by Alexandru the Good's forays into Poland.<sup>156</sup> It was soon to return to Moldavia (1440).<sup>157</sup> Cernăuți is noted in none of these documents. Giurescu believes the fortress of Țețina was located on a hill, several kilometres north-west of Cernăuți, protecting a crossroads and a ford over the Prut.<sup>158</sup> Țețina was the residence of a county by the same name, which would become Cernăuți in the latter half of the 15th century.<sup>159</sup> It was Giurescu too who claimed that the growth of Cernăuți as a town was influenced by the stronghold, but he does not provide any further arguments for this claim. Since the county had the original name of Țețina, we tend to believe that there was a distinct *târg* near the stronghold at Țețina, which was nevertheless eliminated by rivalling Cernăuți.

In Lencăuți, on the bank of the Prut opposite Cernăuți, there were traces of a wooden fortification, destroyed once it entered Mongol dominion. From the 14th century on, the habitation core moved on the right river bank, in Cernăuți.<sup>160</sup> In 1400, the settlement was in an at least pre-urban stage, with Alexandru the Good placing here the last customs house on the road to Kolomyia.<sup>161</sup> Most merchants travelling to Poland passed through Cernăuți, also visiting the large animal fair held near town, so the income derived by the ruler from the customs house and the local market was of great value.<sup>162</sup> Except of its records as a customs house, few 15th century data on the town and its inhabitants have been preserved. In 1490, Ștefan the Great grants the income and the right to trial for several churches to the monastery at Putna.

<sup>154</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 609, doc. 166.

<sup>155</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 18, doc. 13; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 625, doc. 173.

<sup>156</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 660, doc. 183/C;

<sup>157</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 290, doc. 205.

<sup>158</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 321.

<sup>159</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 197, doc. 143; II, p. 284, doc. 190; pp. 314–315, doc. 207–208; p. 334, doc. 220; p. 363, doc. 239.

<sup>160</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 243.

<sup>161</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>162</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 209.

Among them, two from Cernăuți, which is called a *miasto*, indicating a settler community.<sup>163</sup> They probably included Germans and Ruthenians, along with the Romanians. While two Orthodox churches existed in 1490, we may assume they belonged to the Romanians and the Ruthenians. Future testimonies from Catholic missionaries make no mention of a Catholic church in Cernăuți. At the end of the 16th century, when the first such information was noted, the Catholic community had either substantially dwindled, or had not yet been visited. The Catholics in Siret, a bishop's town, are neither mentioned by missionaries. Still, one group of settlers existed here since the early days, and they are credited with manufacturing the grey ceramic uncovered here.<sup>164</sup> Modern outlines of the town still have a central market, with a cluster of tracts of land, probably medieval.<sup>165</sup> The townspeople received the right to elect a *șoltuz*, that documents record later on, in 1599.<sup>166</sup> A mine also probably existed near Cernăuți. One 1488 document refers to a *ruda* (a mine), without stating the exact object of operation.<sup>167</sup> The town was also mentioned during the battles between Ștefan the Great and the Poles in 1497, in 1509, and in the first part of Petru Rareș's reign, since it was set on fire each occasion.<sup>168</sup>

### *Cetatea Albă*

Several medieval settlements developed where the Greek colonies of *Tyras* and *Nikonion* once stood, where the Dniester flowed into the Black Sea. In 11th–15th century sources, they feature under several names, confusing researchers: *Mavrokastron*, *Maurocastrum*, *Moncastro* (“Cetatea Neagră”) or *Asprokastron*, *Albicastrum*, *Belgorod* and *Akkerman* (“Cetatea Albă”). Nicolae Iorga stated that both *Maurocastrum* and *Albicastrum* are the names of a single town, Cetatea Albă, and most Romanian historians have stood by this theory.<sup>169</sup> Among the first to voice their

<sup>163</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 135, doc. 73; p. 140, doc. 74.

<sup>164</sup> Batariuc, “Din nou despre ceramica,” p. 231.

<sup>165</sup> Al. Bocănețu, *Istoria orașului Cernăuți pe timpul Moldovei*, 2nd ed. (Cernăuți, 1933), p. 68 and attached map.

<sup>166</sup> *Din tezaurul*, p. 81, doc. 130; p. 82, doc. 132.

<sup>167</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 62, doc. 36.

<sup>168</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 11–12, 20–21; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 130, 142.

<sup>169</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 26–27; Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, p. 107; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 208–209.



mistrust over this identification was J. Bromberg, whose theories were met with adamant rebuttal in the Romanian academia.<sup>170</sup> The above-mentioned author based his assumptions on the mention of *Album Castrum* and *Maurum Castrum* in a list of eastern Franciscan convents, which were placed in different vicariates, the former in the Russian vicariate, and the latter in that of *Tartaria Aquilonaris*.<sup>171</sup> Research into 1400 lists shows that *Maurum Castrum* is last to come into the custody of the *Gazaria*, which included the Genovese estates in Crimea and north of the Black Sea. This list notes Vicena-Ilice before *Maurum Castrum*, which may indicate both the town of Vicina on the Danube, and the fortress of Ilice, at the Dnieper mouth. What is certain is that the lists include settlements in the north-western parts of the Black Sea.<sup>172</sup> *Album Castrum* is mentioned in a separate jurisdiction, along Lviv, Kolomyia, Kamieniec, Siret, Baia and Licostomo.<sup>173</sup> Kilia's documents also had a 1360 text referring both to *Asperum Castrum*, and to *Maocastro*.<sup>174</sup> Jan Długosz also notes that: "The Dniester has its mouths in the Great Sea south of Cetatea Neagră and Cetatea Albă (*inferius Nigrum et Album Castra*)".<sup>175</sup> Bromberg's confusion lies in the fact that, not knowledgeable of the internal sources in Moldavia, he believed *Maurocastrum* to have been in Crimea, the name of the present Cetatea Albă being considered a later invention.<sup>176</sup>

Recently, Matei Cazacu and Șerban Papacostea endeavoured to explain this double name. Although the two suggested different theories, they both agree that there were two distinct settlements at the Dniester mouth: Cetatea Albă and Cetatea Neagră, one of the western bank, and the other on the eastern one. Until recently, it was believed that the latter, also called Cerna or Czarnigrad, was a later settlement, since it is especially noted on the maps of the 17th and the 18th centu-

<sup>170</sup> Bromberg, "Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies," pp. 151–180; 449–475; N. Bănescu, "Fantaisies et réalités historiques," *Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* (Bruxelles) vol. XIII (1938), fasc. I, pp. 73–90; N. Bănescu, "Maurocastrum—Mo(n)castro—Cetatea-Albă," *AARMSI*, 3rd series, vol. 22 (1939–1940), pp. 165–178.

<sup>171</sup> Bromberg, "Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies," p. 164 (1937); 54–55 (1938).

<sup>172</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, pp. 32–36; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 116–118; *Annales minorum*, vol. IX, p. 298.

<sup>173</sup> *Annales minorum*, vol. IX, p. 296.

<sup>174</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 83, doc. 41.

<sup>175</sup> Dlugossi, *Annales seu cronicae*, vol. I, p. 75.

<sup>176</sup> Bromberg, "Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies," pp. 58–69 (1938).

ries.<sup>177</sup> It also features in many previous sources, with the most revealing being a donation by King Władysław III of Poland (1434–1444) to Teodoryc Buczacki, in 1442. The king reimbursed the captain of Podolia with three royal strongholds: *Caravul* (today Rashkov), upstream Dniester, *Haggibeg* (Caczibei, Odessa now stands here), by the sea, and *Czarnigrad*, “where the Dniester flows into the sea” (*ubi Dniestr fluvius dictus mare intrat*). The three strongholds were part of a defensive system meant to protect Poland’s possessions in the Black Sea area. In 1442, Cetatea Albă was certainly a Moldavian domain, so, as for Czarnigrad—Cetatea Neagră, we can only infer that the donation referred to another stronghold, on the other side of the Dniester bank.<sup>178</sup> It could not have been near Cetatea Albă, as Papacostea has it, since the two fortified settlements, regardless of their status as a stronghold and a town, could not have such close names (Rom. “cetate” = “stronghold”), and yet so different (Rom. “albă”—“neagră” = “white”—“black”). If the ones crossing through town would have found out there were two settlements with such different colour names, we believe they would have mentioned this, but no one did. Instead, they let themselves be drawn in the confusion between the two, which persisted to this day. The 16th–18th centuries sources cited by Papacostea actually refer to the stronghold in Cetatea Albă, as well as to the town nearby, surrounded by walls as well.<sup>179</sup> More significantly, Slavonic sources never mistake Cetatea Albă with Cetatea Neagră. Polish texts in Latin do not confuse the two either. A study of several documents in the Lviv archives shows that Cetatea Albă was only called *Albo Castro* or *Belgorod* in the 15th century.<sup>180</sup> Under the name of *Cernă* (“black” in Slavonic), Cetatea Neagră follows immediately after Cetatea Albă in the Kiev list. This enumeration is surprisingly accurate for those times, on a south to north basis.<sup>181</sup> This is why Cerna or Cetatea Neagră must have been located somewhere south, and not in northern Moldavia where it was mistaken for Cernăuți on several occasions.<sup>182</sup> A place called *Czarne ruinée* is plotted on a 1650 map, north of Cetatea Albă,

<sup>177</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 205; Mariana Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă. Studiu de arhitectură militară medievală* (Chişinău, 1998), pp. 17–19.

<sup>178</sup> Cazacu, “A propos de l’expansion,” pp. 100–104, 114–115.

<sup>179</sup> Papacostea, “Maurocastrum,” pp. 911–915; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, p. 24.

<sup>180</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–293.

<sup>181</sup> *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>182</sup> Bădărău, Caproşu, *Iaşii*, p. 24; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 72, 205–206.

on the eastern bank, so Tihomirov's theory that the Cernă in the Kiev list was here is probably close to home.<sup>183</sup>

We therefore tend to lend credence to the two-fortress hypothesis; the two were initially Byzantine, predate the 13th century, and had trade settlements emerge around them. We cannot otherwise explain how the two names of *Mavrokastron* and *Asprokastron* found their way so early in sources.<sup>184</sup> On the bank of the great rivers, we will find other instances of twin settlements. The Danube is a good example: between Wallachia and Bulgaria, and then the Ottoman Empire, there was a sizable number of such settlements: Turnu—Nikopol, Giurgiu—Ruse, Silistra—the settlement in Păcuilui lui Soare island, Brăila—Măcin. They could have evolved into towns, since they held special political status and were under different rules. However, until finding new evidence of archaeologically identifying *Cetatea Neagră*, we must approach this case with restraint. Our comments will take into account the name attached to these settlements in sources and, for the period leading up to the 1400s, we will tackle them separately.

The 1241 Mongol conquest of the territory north of the Black Sea determined the development and urbanization of the towns in the region. The Nymphaion treaty (1261) allowed Genovese sailors to take a more active part in trading cereal crops, wax, honey, skins and slaves north of the Black Sea. The Mongols allowed the Genovese to settle on their Crimea domains, in Caffa (1266) and Sugdaia (1274), and then in the two settlements on the mouth of the Dniester, where they provided them trading rights.<sup>185</sup> Shortly, they began minting coins with the Mongol tamga on one side, and the Genoves cross on the others, evocative of the political and economic duality in place here.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Tihomirov, "Spisok russkih gorodov," pp. 226–229. Mariana Şlapac also claims that the vanished settlement of *Czarne* must be searched near the Dniester bank, in the Maiaki-Belaevka area, in present-day Ukraine (Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă*, p. 17; Mariana Şlapac, *Cetăţi medievale din Moldova (mijlocul secolului al XIV-lea—mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)* (Chişinău, 2004), p. 52).

<sup>184</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 52, doc. 32; p. 59, doc. 37.

<sup>185</sup> For the early days of the Genoves presence by the Black Sea see Gh. I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1929), pp. 197–249; Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, vol. I, pp. 114–118, 127–162; Ciociltan, *Mongolii*, pp. 137–149; Spinei, "Comerţul," pp. 182–184.

<sup>186</sup> Octavian Iliescu, "La monnaie génoise dans les pays roumains aux XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles," in *Colocviul româno-italian "Genovezii la Marea Neagră în secolele XIII–XIV"*. Bucharest, 1975, ed. Ştefan Pascu (Bucharest, 1977), p. 162.

The Genovese are first mentioned in the area by the Dniester mouth in 1290.<sup>187</sup> Italian sources mostly record the *Maurocastrum*, since the “Mongol road” from Poland (via the Galician Rus’ and Podolia) ran along the Dniester valley and stopped in Cetatea Neagră, on the eastern bank. Some merchants or sailors certainly stopped and traded on the other bank as well, in Cetatea Albă, but the Genovese seem to grant priority to Cetatea Neagră at this point. Also, the Italian sources of the time are the only ones not liable to mistake the two, since sailors from Genoa or Venice were well acquainted with the sea and its harbours. An earlier list of Franciscan possessions in the vicariate of *Tartaria* (1314) only mentions the *Marum Castrum*.<sup>188</sup> One document issued by the Genovese chancellery in 1316 forbade Genovese merchants from trading with Bulgaria, due to the refusal of the emperor in Târnovo to reimburse the Italians for damages to them on his estates. This text, which only records *Maurocastrum*, has brought divergence among historians, some believing the Mongols had relinquished Cetatea Albă (and Cetatea Neagră as well) to the Bulgarian emperor,<sup>189</sup> while others believe the two only remained under direct Mongol control.<sup>190</sup> Even if we were to admit Bulgarians were present on the Dniester mouths, we cannot so readily discard the Mongol presence here, especially since Bulgaria was still under the sway of the Golden Horde. In all this time, the name *Asprokastron* lent to Cetatea Albă is only linked to several notes by a bishop in a list of the bishoprics under the Patriarchy of Constantinople under Andronikos II (1282–1328). The first bishop seems to be the one in Cetatea Albă, inaccurately placed by the Dnieper mouth, and the other is from a town by a seemingly identical name, Bielgorod, near Kiev. One third mention dates back to 1345 and concerns bishop Chiril from *Asprokastron*, who allegedly attended the election of the bishop of Smolensk.<sup>191</sup>

Archaeological research undertaken so far in Cetatea Albă could not point to similar timelines for the fortifications and the nearby town. We cannot tell when the first one emerged. Its strategic location was responsible to the same extent for the creation of a stronghold,

<sup>187</sup> Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, p. 102 and 176, doc. XL; Balard, Gênes, tom I, p. 203, doc. 569.

<sup>188</sup> *Annales minorum*, vol. VI, p. 256.

<sup>189</sup> Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, pp. 107–114; Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii*, p. 292; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 210; Ciocîltan, *Mongolii*, pp. 247–250.

<sup>190</sup> Spinci, *Moldova*, pp. 212–215.

<sup>191</sup> Spinci, *Moldova*, p. 282.

and for the development of a trade settlement.<sup>192</sup> In 1360, the Mongols still had not left Cetatea Albă. The text cited above, mentioning both Cetatea Albă, and Cetatea Neagră, also writes of a slave purchased from the Mongols in Cetatea Albă (*redemūt a Sarracenis in loco Asperi Castrī in quo loco erat sclava*).<sup>193</sup> It was claimed that said Demetrius, “prince of the Mongols,” noted in 1368 (and probably in 1363), had controlled the land by the Danube mouths, including Cetatea Albă and Kilia.<sup>194</sup> This checks out, since Demetrius had negotiated with King Louis of Hungary a tax exemption for the merchants in “his country” in exchange for exemptions similar to those granted for the Braşov merchants. The mention made to merchants undertaking long-distance trade also implies the existence of towns, which may well be the centres noted above.

Until the latter half of the 14th century, sources hint that Cetatea Albă was secondary, economically and politically, to Cetatea Neagră. This would change once the status of the land between the Carpathians and the Dniester changes as well. A new actor takes centre-stage here: Moldavia. Moldavian princes had their own conquest agendas, and these agendas consequently led to an increased importance for Cetatea Albă. Ştefan S. Gorovei relates Moldavia’s gain of Cetatea Albă to two factors: the development of the Moldavian alternate route for the “Mongol road” and Lithuania gaining ground towards the Black Sea after 1363, including Cetatea Albă as well. Political changes in the area lead to Cetatea Albă gradually outsizing its rival on the other shore. As Gorovei claims, Cetatea Albă had entered Moldavian control around 1377–1378, after counteracting an attempt by Lithuanian Yuri Koriatow of taking over the principality.<sup>195</sup> C. Racoviţă prefers the theory whereby Cetatea Albă was under Lithuanian control until 1390, whereas Şerban Papacostea and Victor Spinei take on a different path suggested by a 1386 source. In this year, the Genovese were at war with the Mongols and one of their envoys from Caffa headed to Moldavia, and was to enter the country via *Maocastro*.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă*, p. 47.

<sup>193</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 83, doc. 41.

<sup>194</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 90, doc. 49. In the battle of *Sinie Vodī* (1362 or 1363), the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Olgierd, defeated three Mongol chieftains, one named Dimitri (Brătianu, “Demetrius Princeps Tartatorum,” pp. 42–46; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 325–326).

<sup>195</sup> Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 200–210.

<sup>196</sup> Racoviţă, “Începuturile suzeranităţii,” pp. 316–317; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, p. 118; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 382–385.

If we were to accept that the *Maurocastrum* was actually on the other bank of the Dniester, the assertion that the envoys entered Moldavia via Cetatea Albă, now a Moldavian land, would no longer find that much support. Ultimately, Ștefan Andreescu identified another Genoese mention in 1386, which notes the presence of a Mongol ruler who probably controlled northern Danube and who had received gifts. It was against this backdrop that the Mongol domination in the area had been pushed towards 1387–1390.<sup>197</sup>

What we know for sure is that, when Roman I becomes self-proclaimed ruler “from mountains to the sea,” Cetatea Albă was already part of Moldavia (1392).<sup>198</sup> Its change in status explains why, in 1400, *Album Castrum* was already part of the Russian vicariate, along with towns in former Galician Rus’ and Moldavia, while *Maurocastrum*, together with Caffa and Sugdaia had remained in *custodia Gazaria* of the *Tartaria Aquilonaris* vicariate.<sup>199</sup> In 1410, Nicola de Porta confirms that the Genoese were still in *Mocastro*, which was in “Saracen land”, and not Moldavian territory.<sup>200</sup> *From this point on, sources on the Maurocastrum lose clarity even more, since they are more liable to confuse it with Cetatea Albă.* In 1435, the Venetian bailiff in Constantinople was contacted by the father (a monk) of a certain *dominus Maurocastri*,<sup>201</sup> mentioned also in a Genoese source in 1458.<sup>202</sup> Several years before, in 1445, Walerand de Wavrin wrote that the lord of Wavrin had reached *Moncastro*, “where there stood a town and a fortress of the Genoese.”<sup>203</sup> All these are believed to point out an independence from Moldavia for the town. Instead, in 1455, famine leads the Genoese in Caffa to look for cereals in *Maurocastrum*, where they approach a *pârcaľab*, while another source of the time speaks of *Petri vayuode domini Velachie inferioris et Mocastri*.<sup>204</sup> In parallel, the same sources mention the Moldavian

<sup>197</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 15–21.

<sup>198</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.

<sup>199</sup> *Annales minorum*, vol. IX, pp. 296, 298.

<sup>200</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 57.

<sup>201</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 93; Bogdan, “Inscriptiile,” pp. 343–344; Bănescu, “Maurocastrum,” pp. 167–170, 175–178.

<sup>202</sup> Octavian Iliescu, “Les armoiries de la ville d’Asprokastron et leur origine byzantine,” in *Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines*, vol. II, eds. Emilian Popescu, Octavian Iliescu, Tudor Teoteoi (Bucharest, 1991), pp. 160–163.

<sup>203</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 83.

<sup>204</sup> *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, vol. VI, ed. P. Amedeo Vigna (Genova, 1868), p. 343, doc. CXXXVIII; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 73–79.

ruler and the “*jupan* and *senior* in Album Castrum.”<sup>205</sup> Italian sailors continue using the old name they were accustomed to, but textual clues are no longer as clear as to what settlement this was. The area east of the Dniester was no longer safe and we cannot rule out that, in the early battles of the century that the Lithuanians and the Mongols waged over control of the Black Sea coast, Cetatea Neagră had been destroyed. It was to it or to a fortress nearby that Ghillebert de Lanoy refers to in 1421 when relating the building of new fortifications on the Dniester bank.<sup>206</sup> It was in these violent times as well that the Genovese fortress of Ilice by the mouth of the Dnieper was destroyed too (and was rebuilt in 1448).<sup>207</sup> A possible destruction or competition by Cetatea Albă pushed *Maurocastrum* out of the picture. Its name endured, as well as the confusion with Cetatea Albă in the accounts of travelers, geographers and historians of the time.

In 1415, the Constance council had a delegation from Cetatea Albă attend it too. Constantin I. Karadja, who studied the writings documenting the attending delegations, identified the town of Weissenburg, which he does however mistake for Belgrade, probably the one in Serbia.<sup>208</sup> Since Weissenburg is mentioned alongside Kilia and Caffa, we believe this indicates Cetatea Albă, which is also named in German sources bearing the name above. Oddly enough, Karadja never found the town on the list of Moldavian settlements, but alongside towns by the Black Sea. Despite coming under Moldavian rule, the townspeople of Cetatea Albă enjoyed autonomy.<sup>209</sup> Since the preserved sources mention no consul in the 14th century, historians believed the rights held here by the Genovese to have been more restricted.<sup>210</sup> Still, Hasdeu did come to examine a privilege that Alexandru the Good had granted the Genovese in 1409, containing a provision for trade storage in Cetatea Albă for them, as well as for a consul.<sup>211</sup> The Genovese certainly enjoyed the presence of a notary: in 1464, Georgio Pollo, a notary in Cetatea Albă, testified in front of the Genovese consul in

<sup>205</sup> “Petro vayuode domino Velachie Inferioris et magnifico ac spectabilibus dominis *jupano* et senioribus Albicastro” (*Atti della Societa Ligure*, vol. VI, p. 307, doc. CXXI).

<sup>206</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 50–51.

<sup>207</sup> *Atti della Societa Ligure*, vol. VI, p. 307, doc. CXXI; Guido Astuti, “Le colonie genovesi del Mar Nero e i loro ordinamenti giuridici,” in *Colocviul româno-italian*, p. 107.

<sup>208</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” p. 82.

<sup>209</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 116.

<sup>210</sup> Balard, *La Romanie Gênoise*, p. 148; Spinci, “Comerțul,” pp. 188–189.

<sup>211</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 21–25.

Caffa. This office existed in the harbour by the Dniester mouth, and was required in order to legalize various commercial negotiations.<sup>212</sup>

In 1421, the Genovese are the first ones mentioned among town inhabitants, along with the Romanians and the Armenians.<sup>213</sup> The Greeks, very active tradesmen, also joined them.<sup>214</sup> In 1454, a group of townspeople in Cetatea Albă conquer the castle of Ilice, by the Dnieper mouth, redeemed from the Mongols and controlled by the Senarega brothers.<sup>215</sup> Iorga believed that this action was a personal initiative of those in Cetatea Albă, without involving the ruler or his representatives.<sup>216</sup> Ștefan Andreescu believes however that the source which mentions the 1454 attack is proof to the involvement of the *pârcălab* in Cetatea Albă, since it refers to *magnifico ac spectabilibus dominis iupano et senioribus Albicastroi*.<sup>217</sup> Regardless of the town's status, the merchants in this town rid themselves of competition by occupying Ilice, while the ruler of Moldavia consolidated his power in the area and won a beachhead further east. The two parties were interested in working together. We would later find out that the new ruler, Ștefan the Great, was not so eager to return the castle to the Genovese in Caffa. Later requests from Genoa fell on deaf ears, and the fortification remained a Moldavian domain, probably until 1475.<sup>218</sup>

The custom of leaving towns which changed political status with room for autonomy is also present in countries in south-eastern Europe. Skopje and Prilep, inhabited mostly by Greeks, preserved their Byzantine structure in 14th century Serbia. The *Žakonik* of Stefan Dušan (1349, 1354) acknowledged their old rights. Art. 124 in the code makes specific mention to “the Greek towns the emperor took”, which receive confirmation for the documents and estates they had when conquered. Hungary had a similar attitude toward harbour-towns in Dalmatia. Mircea the Old kept in nearby Silistra a Byzantine system too; there are examples aplenty.<sup>219</sup> One element which demonstrates

<sup>212</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 287, doc. 13.

<sup>213</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 50; Gr. Avakian, “Inscripțiile armenești din Cetatea Albă,” *RI*, vol. IX, no. 7–9 (1923), p. 127.

<sup>214</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–283, doc. I–II.

<sup>215</sup> *Atti della Societa Ligure*, vol. VI, p. 307, doc. CXXI.

<sup>216</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, pp. 32–36; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 116–118.

<sup>217</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, p. 117; *Atti della Societa Ligure*, vol. VI, p. 307, doc. CXXI.

<sup>218</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 130; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 118–124.

<sup>219</sup> Burr, “The Code,” p. 521; Pljakov, “Le statut de la ville,” pp. 81–82; Sedlar, *East Central Europe*, p. 130; Rădvan, *Orașele din Țara Românească*, pp. 269–270.



the existence of a special status in Cetatea Albă as well is the minting of bronze coins in mid 15th century (c. 1449–1456). The coins held both the symbols of Moldavia and a Greek cross accompanied by the town name, *Asprokastron*, in Greek.<sup>220</sup> The symbol and the name are indicative of the significance of the Greek element along with the Genovese one in town.<sup>221</sup> By consent from the ruler, who was well aware this would increase his income, Cetatea Albă received the right to coinage, and was the only one in Moldavia with this right.

The Moldavian ruler saw owning the town as having multiple benefits:

1. a political-military one, since he controlled the fortress overlooking a strategic location;
2. an economic benefit, since the customs house reaped significant income;
3. a religious one, due to the presence or reactivation of an older bishopric here, which was then used to obtain acknowledgement by the Constantinople Patriarchy for a Moldavian Orthodox Metropolitan Church.<sup>222</sup>

The customs house in Cetatea Albă is mentioned in the 1408 privilege, while the 1456 and 1460 privileges note it as “the Mongol customs house.”<sup>223</sup> Strange is the late mention of a *pârcălab* here, a representative of the ruler’s authority and head of the stronghold, who only features in sources once fortification works are underway (1440).<sup>224</sup> Near the citadel, on the garrison grounds, Ștefan the Great completed a wall in 1476–1479, meant to ensure protection for a civilian enclosure.<sup>225</sup> Those overseeing the town outlines claimed that this enclosure was a refuge in times of need for the townspeople, whose house were outside

<sup>220</sup> P. Nicorescu, “Monete moldovenești bătute la Cetatea Albă,” *Cercetări istorice* (Iași) vol. XVII (1943), pp. 75–88; Iliescu, “La monnaie génoise,” p. 161; *Monede și bancnote românești*, eds. G. Buzdugan, O. Luchian, C. C. Opreșcu (Bucharest, 1977), p. 75, doc. 573–576.

<sup>221</sup> Iliescu, “Les armoiries,” pp. 157–159.

<sup>222</sup> *Izvoarele istoriei României*, vol. IV, p. 269, doc. 66. According to Ștefan S. Gorovei, the reactivation of the bishopric in Cetatea Albă was performed by Petru I (Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei*, pp. 186–191).

<sup>223</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. CXXVIII.

<sup>224</sup> Bogdan, “Inscripțiile,” pp. 313–325; DRH, A, I, p. 314, doc. 225.

<sup>225</sup> Bogdan, “Inscripțiile,” pp. 331–340.

the walls.<sup>226</sup> We will differ with this opinion: here was the fortified side of the medieval town. The town maps and outlines, despite being only late ones, provide ample evidence that the town was near the citadel and the harbour. They pinpoint houses which ran along streets, and the streets followed a path between the three gates in the wall: “the great gate,” “the mid gate,” and the “waterway gate.” 20 towers lined up the wall of the civilian enclosure. Dwellings were inhabited year-round, and were deserted only in case of an attack. The shoreline had the harbour enclosure, protected as well by a wall with three towers. The entire compound spread over some 9 hectares, with the largest being the civilian enclosure, of around 5 hectares.<sup>227</sup> This surface was sufficient for an urban medieval settlement. Poland has several fortified towns with similar surfaces. Gniezno had a reinforced enclosure of 6 ha, Lublin—7 ha, Olkusz—7 ha; Kraków, one of the largest towns in Central Europe, had an enclosure of around 50 ha.<sup>228</sup> It was the same with Constantinople: its civilian enclosure was inhabited by townspeople, and it acted as a model for Cetatea Albă. Smederevo (11 ha) was another fortress to follow the Byzantine pattern, fortifying the enclosure with townspeople’s houses.<sup>229</sup> Where walls limited the surface of a settlement, the habitation rate also increased. Some suburbs probably existed from the 14th century on, but strategic and economic reasons prevented the ruler from fortifying more than the surface of the urban core, closer to the older stronghold. By the end of the 15th century, the town supposedly had 20,000 houses (an overestimated figure). The one responsible for it probably included inhabitants both in the fortified enclosure, and outside it.<sup>230</sup>

One after the other, the Christian towns by the Black Sea fell to Ottoman rule. After Caffa (1475) came the Moldavian harbours which, although avoiding occupation in 1475–1476, could not withstand an Ottoman invasion led by sultan Bayezid II in 1484. Kilia fell first, in July. Cetatea Albă was next, in August, which surrendered after negotiations

<sup>226</sup> Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă*, pp. 47, 86; Şlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, p. 187.

<sup>227</sup> Outlines in Bogdan, “Inscripțiile,” plan V, and Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă*, pp. 31–113.

<sup>228</sup> Widawski, *Miejskie mury*, pp. 526–529.

<sup>229</sup> Outline and details in Ivan M. Zdravkovič, *Les forteresses médiévales de Serbie* (Belgrade, 1970), pp. 74–83; A. Deroko, *Medieval Castles on the Danube* (Belgrade, 1964), pp. 19–20, images 42–43, 50–65.

<sup>230</sup> Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” p. 56.

and several days of bombing.<sup>231</sup> Even though Cetatea Albă and Kilia became part of the Ottoman Empire, the inhabitants preserved the same ample autonomy. The Ottoman sultans applied similar politics when occupying the mining areas in Serbia and Bosnia or the lands owned in Asia or Africa by the Mamluks, the reasons being political, as well as economic.<sup>232</sup> Merchants in Cetatea Albă received favourable tax duties, similar to those applied to other large towns of the Empire, a sign that the sultan wished to ensure the development of this major harbour. Some elements of tax and legal organization in the period of Moldavian rule endured. In the documents granted the town, there are several mentions of the taxes that were to be collected as per the customs of old, and where the Ottoman legislation made allowance for no new provisions, the “law of old” was to be in force.<sup>233</sup>

### *Cotnari*

The town of Cotnari is in the Hârlău county, which enjoyed an urban density higher than that of other Moldavian counties with its three towns: Hârlău, Botoşani, and Cotnari. The only other county with three towns was Suceava, with Siret, Suceava, and Baia. Cotnari makes for an unusual Moldavian town, since only ten kilometres separated it and Hârlău. Most Moldavian towns emerged at only a day’s distance from each other, at 35–45 km. The proximity of the two towns has to do with a very favourable soil for vineyards. However, the vineyard had its centre in Cotnari, and not in Hârlău, a town which owes its emergence to other conditions. Instead, in Cotnari, the vineyard and the wine were decisive in the urban emergence. This is also revealed by the town position, which stood parallel to the road from Hârlău to Târgul Frumos, and not on it.<sup>234</sup> No customs house was set up in Cotnari. The townspeople dealt mainly in vinegrowing and wineselling, as illustrated by the Latin town seal.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>231</sup> *Cronici slavo-române*, p. 10, 19; *Cronici turceşti*, vol. I, pp. 76–78, 130–132, 325–327; Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 68–69.

<sup>232</sup> Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 80–81.

<sup>233</sup> Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 71, 80; Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville*, p. 173, doc. XIII.

<sup>234</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 265, doc. 322.

<sup>235</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 452; Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” pp. 35–36.

The vineyard here developed on the east slope of the hills of Hârlău, which also provided excellent exposure to sun, along with their fertile soils, this area being the northern limit for vinegrowing.<sup>236</sup> All vineyards in Moldavia (Cotnari, Odobești, Huși) display this exposure. Vineyards probably existed in this region since ancient times, but it was the German and Hungarian colonists settling here in the latter half of the 14th century who brought along superior techniques for harnessing their potential. They had crossed the Carpathians from Transylvania to come here, since Poland did not have such a widespread wine industry as Hungary did. In Cotnari, historical sources confirm that the Catholic group (Saxons and Hungarians) was numerous, and prevailed in the town community.<sup>237</sup> We owe the Hungarians the names for the hills of Țombric, Laslău and Cătălina.<sup>238</sup> Lack of archaeological research prevents us from revealing how settlers came about, but we believe that this was a typical *locatio*. The few discoveries made certify an urban-type settlement in the former half of the 15th century: dwellings with tiled stoves, specific to towns, imported ceramics, high habitation density etc.<sup>239</sup> The Catholic missionaries visiting town after 1600 relate that the Saxons “live in the best places, since they were the first to settle in this town and say they were the ones who first planted the vines.”<sup>240</sup> The “places” (plots) were in the middle of the settlement, while the Romanians inhabited the outskirts. The Catholics wasted no time in erecting three churches in a row, evidence in its own right to the number and the wealth of the community.<sup>241</sup> The largest church was the Church of Dormition of the Holy Virgin, while the other two were St Urban and St Leonard.<sup>242</sup> In early 18th century, Dimitrie Cantemir described the churches in Cotnari as “made of stone, in wondrous manner.”<sup>243</sup> The Catholic parish was organized along similar lines to that in Câmpulung, Wallachia: the church goods were not

<sup>236</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 182.

<sup>237</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 261; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 236.

<sup>238</sup> Cihodaru, “Podgoriile,” pp. 7–8; *Podgoria Cotnari*, eds. Valeriu D. Cotea, Mircea Ciubotaru, Neculai Barbu (Bucharest, 2006), pp. 82, 89–91.

<sup>239</sup> Stela Cheptea, *Un oraș medieval: Hârlău* (Iași, 2000), p. 77.

<sup>240</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 238.

<sup>241</sup> In 1599, Bernardo Quirini even counts three churches, three of stone and one of wood (*Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 39). See also Gorovei, “Cu privire la patriciatul,” pp. 260–265.

<sup>242</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, pp. 75, 180–182, 237–238.

<sup>243</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 160.

administered by the parish priest, but by the community.<sup>244</sup> This community was also powerful enough to maintain a Latin school founded by Despot, a supporter of Protestantism.<sup>245</sup>

Germans were also the source of the town's name. Iorga and Giurescu claimed the name to be Romanian, originating in *cot*—a measurement unit for a barrel, the *cotnar* being the one to use the *cot*—or in *cotun*, *cățun*, a small village, the inhabitants of which would be the *cotunari*.<sup>246</sup> None of these variants holds water, since the one using the *cot* would be called a *cotar*, and there are no such settlements as *Cotunari* in Moldavia.<sup>247</sup> The Latin documents have the town name as a singular, *Cotnar*, while the German ones note it as *Kottnersberg*.<sup>248</sup> Bishop Marco Bandini recorded a local tradition, which ascribed the early days of the settlement to a vine planter, the German Gutnar or Gutnor, a legend confirming that the origin of the town's name was indeed a German person's name.<sup>249</sup>

Internal documents certify Cotnari only later on, in 1448, a year in which it was probably already a town. Petru II then decides to transfer to the monastery at Probota one part of the wine collected in Hârlău or Cotnari, as well as the *camena* from Târgul Frumos.<sup>250</sup> The *șoltuz* is mentioned a long time after the privilege was granted, in 1541 (*Groff am Kottnersberg*).<sup>251</sup> Since the ruler had a residence in the vicinity, in Hârlău, we cannot say for sure whether such a residence was built in Cotnari too. Ștefan the Great did erect a church in town, but up to now, no notable traces of any buildings resembling a princely palace were uncovered nearby.<sup>252</sup> A more unusual trait was that the ruler was represented here by a *pârcălab* (called *castellanus* in Latin sources) and not by a *vornic*.<sup>253</sup> The Cotnari vineyards (and later others, purchased

<sup>244</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 236–242.

<sup>245</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 141, 261. Details in Ștefan Bîrsănescu, “*Schola latina*” de la Cotnari (Bucharest, 1957).

<sup>246</sup> N. Iorga, “Cercetări noi la Cotnari,” *BCMI*, vol. XXVIII (1935), p. 75; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 225.

<sup>247</sup> *Tezaurul toponimic al României. Moldova*, vol. I, part 3, eds. Dragoș Moldovanu. Mircea Ciubotaru (Iași, 2004), pp. 37–38.

<sup>248</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 328, doc. 608; p. 349, doc. 652; p. 521, doc. 955.

<sup>249</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 234; *Podgoria Cotnari*, pp. 52–54.

<sup>250</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288; II, p. 34, doc. 26.

<sup>251</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 521, doc. 955; DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 238, doc. 292.

<sup>252</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 217; *Podgoria Cotnari*, pp. 60–61.

<sup>253</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 328, doc. 608; p. 349, doc. 652; p. 387, doc. 731; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 336, doc. 144.

from the townspeople) are used by the rulers to make donations for the churches, monasteries, and boyars, a phenomenon which magnifies after 1550.<sup>254</sup> Townspeople from other centres are noted among the owners of vineyards, especially the ones from the north, where vinegrowing met with a less auspicious climate: Armenians and Saxons from Roman, Suceava, and Baia.<sup>255</sup>

The Catholics in Cotnari switch to Protestant faith, once the Reform had made inroads into Moldavia. The fierce anti-Protestant move after Despot's rule takes its toll on the inhabitants, the sources mentioning assassinations, both among the common folk, as well as among the wealthy ones.<sup>256</sup> Despite this, the community remains, even after 1600, one where the Germans and the Hungarians prevailed. The Polish-Ottoman wars of 1672–1699 deal one last blow to the town, which relapses into a village.<sup>257</sup>

### *Dorohoi*

Chroniclers place the residence of the Upper Country in Dorohoi.<sup>258</sup> Historians attempted to identify the reasons why this town, of all others, was chosen, but no coherent answer has been made to this day on account of the unsatisfactory sources. In Bârlad, the centre of the Lower Country, archaeological research has unearthed traces of an ancient settlement, while in Dorohoi, only the first church of the ruler's residence has been uncovered, one erected under Alexandru the Good.<sup>259</sup> Documents issued here by Ștefan II in 1434 or by Ilie I in 1437 have been kept,<sup>260</sup> as well as texts documenting the *ocol*.<sup>261</sup> Unfortunately, since no massive excavations exist, we cannot say whether a local ruler resided here before Moldavia emerged. The name of the

<sup>254</sup> DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 71, doc. 67; III, p. 78, doc. 96.

<sup>255</sup> *Din tezaurul*, p. 68, doc. 94; *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 208, doc. 81; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 326; Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 194, 210, 222.

<sup>256</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 266–267.

<sup>257</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 237; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 236; *Podgoria Cotnari*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>258</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 176, 186; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 70; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 159, 240.

<sup>259</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2004*, 23 May 2005 <http://archweb.cimec.ro/Arheologie/cronicaCA2005/cd/index.htm> (4 November 2008); Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 261; *Repertoriul arheologic*, p. 117.

<sup>260</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 185, doc. 132; D, I, p. 342, doc. 246.

<sup>261</sup> DIR, A, XVI, IV, p. 10, doc. 12; XVII, III, p. 209, doc. 309.

town could provide some clues in this respect. There are three main interpretations. The one which appealed to most historians ascribes the name to the Slavonic *doroga*, meaning “road.”<sup>262</sup> Dorohoi was situated on a branch of the trade road linking Poland to the Black Sea on the route Kamieniec—Hotin—Dorohoi—Botoșani—Hârlău. Another theory claims the town name comes from a person’s name, Dorogun.<sup>263</sup> The last perspective relates the town to the Mongol domination of the 13th century. The word *daruga* originally indicate a Mongol official in control of an administrative-territorial unit, a village or a town, and was charged with taxing subjects of the khan. In Russia, the term was transcribed and adopted as *doroga*, and was then mistaken for the Slavonic term mentioned above which meant “road,” and with a local institution, the *putj*, whose name is also a derivative from a synonym for *doroga*.<sup>264</sup> It was in the northern half of Moldavia, not far from Dorohoi, that several settlement names or rivers of a Cuman-Mongol origin endured (Văscăuți, Bascacouți, Băscăceni, Bașeu), reminiscent of the presence of a group with Eastern features or connected to the time when this land was under Mongol control. Alexandru Gonța believes even that the Mongols were the triggers for the division into Lower and Upper Country for Moldavia, the reasons being mostly tax-related.<sup>265</sup> Although appealing, this theory does not have sufficient arguments in its favour.

Giurescu believes that the settlement probably predates Moldavia, when it acted as a *târg* for the area of the future Dorohoi county. The first documents to mention the settlement support this theory. In 1407, the boyars who confirm alongside Alexandru the Good their allegiance to the Polish king also have Mihail from Dorohoi among their ranks, a grand boyar of the country, third after the ruler.<sup>266</sup> Even though he is mentioned in sources since 1395, it is only in 1407 that his name is associated with Dorohoi, and it will remain as such for the rest of his life.<sup>267</sup> Later on, we will find that he had massive wealth,

<sup>262</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 230.

<sup>263</sup> Moldovanu, “Toponimia Moldovei,” p. XL.

<sup>264</sup> István Vásáry, “The Golden Horde Term “Daruğa” and its Survival in Russia,” in *Turks, Tatars and Russians*, pp. 187–197.

<sup>265</sup> *Românii și Hoarda de Aur*, p. 84; Alexandru I. Gonța, *Satul în Moldova medievală. Instituțiile* (Bucharest, 1986), p. 138. Victor Spinei does not agree with this theory (Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 278)

<sup>266</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 628, doc. 175.

<sup>267</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 609, doc. 166.

made up of 50 villages, some located near Dorohoi.<sup>268</sup> The privilege granted to Polish rulers in 1408 confirms the existence of a customs house in Dorohoi, which taxed the horses taken to Kamieniec.<sup>269</sup> Most other customs houses in the document were in towns, so at that point, the urbanization process was in its final stages in Dorohoi too. The existence of a ruler's customs house here shows that Mihail was not the owner of Dorohoi at that time. The grand boyar had probably been appointed a judge for Dorohoi, an office otherwise certified in 1459.<sup>270</sup>

The sources on Dorohoi are so unreliable, that we know virtually nothing on the community living here until 1500. There seem to be no Catholics living in town, and no Armenians either, since their churches are not mentioned. It is likely that most inhabitants were Romanians, and probably Ruthenian as well. Even though the *șoltuz* is certified later, we believe that the townspeople received the right to elect their own representatives at least from the 15th century on.<sup>271</sup>

### *Fălcium*

As trade activities intensified in Moldavia, a *târg* emerged by a Prut ford, on the road that followed the valley of this river.<sup>272</sup> Its initial name was Vadul Călugăresc and it receives its first mention in 1447,<sup>273</sup> when Ștefan II reinforces half the customs duty for the monastery of Moldovița here.<sup>274</sup> It was later on named Fălcium, reminiscent of a person's name.<sup>275</sup>

There were both a town and a county by this name. The county emerged only later in documents (1533), probably following a pre-1500 administrative make-over.<sup>276</sup> Along with Fălcium, there was another town in the county, the town of Huși, developed in the latter half of

<sup>268</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 245, doc. 175.

<sup>269</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>270</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 26, doc. 22; p. 118, doc. 83.

<sup>271</sup> DIR, A, XVII, I, p. 121, doc. 175.

<sup>272</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 517.

<sup>273</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 385, doc. 272.

<sup>274</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 57, doc. 41; p. 243, doc. 164.

<sup>275</sup> Mircea Ciobotaru, "Revizuire toponimice: Fălcium," *SMIM*, vol. XX (2002), pp. 327–343.

<sup>276</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 358, doc. 324.



the 15th century. Since the administrative residence was established in Fălciu, we may assume this to be older. The small *târg* by the ford developed and gained the right to have a *șoltuz* and *pârgari*, as well as its own seal.<sup>277</sup>

In 1538, when the Ottomans invade Moldavia, Suleiman I the Magnificent sets up camp here. The settlement is described in contradictory terms, either as a “small town,” with “large churches” and a “hunting mansion for the ruler,” or as a “powerful fortress.”<sup>278</sup> Ottoman chronicles were somewhat biased in their observations, so the size of the town and the fortress in Fălciu were certainly overstated. However, Cantemir’s *Descriptio Moldaviae* does provide us with confirmation of the data in the chronicle. Upon hearing of ruins existing near Fălciu, the prince dispatched his servants to study the area, who reported having noticed the ruins of a large town near the Prut, within the bounds of an “elongated circle,” probably the walls of a fortress. No thorough excavations were undertaken in modern times to confirm the existence of these ruins. Only some earth ramparts were identified so far.<sup>279</sup> It is likely that the town and the ruler’s residence were enclosed in a palisade and moats, and Ottoman chroniclers lent it the foreboding aspect of a mighty citadel.

### *Galați*

Proof of the fact that the southern area of Moldavia held different status than the central and northern ones is the town of Galați, which stands by the Danube, a short distance away from the harbour of Brăila. Since the land where the Galați settlement developed was under Wallachian jurisdiction for a while, the ascension to urban status occurred later. The same country could not have had two harbour-towns less than 20 km one from the other. When Wallachia lost this territory, probably after the death of Mircea the Old, the conditions for the emergence of a *târg* were also created here, especially since this was the end of the trade route accompanying the Siret valley. Archaeological research undertaken in small perimeters in the town centre revealed

<sup>277</sup> DIR, XVII, A, II, p. 61, doc. 67.

<sup>278</sup> *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 267, 534–535.

<sup>279</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 157, 170.

ceramics of a Byzantine influence from the 14th–15th centuries, which point to the existence of merchants and artisans here.<sup>280</sup> Since it stood by the Danube, close to large ponds, Galați initially specialized in fish trade.

The settlement is not mentioned in 1435, when Ștefan II and Ilie I divide the country, probably since it was not too significant to be worth mentioning. Instead, the county of Covurlui emerges, which would later have its seat in Galați. A decisive event in the history of the town was the Ottoman conquest of Kilia and Cetatea Albă in 1484.<sup>281</sup> Moldavia lost its access to the sea, and only preserved a small land by the Danube, in the area where Galați stands. In early 16th century, Galați was already widely known, since it is noted in a description of Moldavia by Georg Reicherstorffer (c. 1528).<sup>282</sup> After 1500, the community receives the privilege to organize as the other townspeople in the country did.<sup>283</sup> Foreigners were also among the inhabitants. It was barely at the end of the 16th century that a group of Catholics is recorded, who also erected a church.<sup>284</sup> Even though the town emerged later than others in Moldavia, the Catholics settled near the marketplace as well, a piece of information which makes a case for their endurance here.<sup>285</sup> Being at the southern end of the country, Galați could not avoid Greeks settling in, who start increasing in number after 1500.<sup>286</sup>

### *Hârlău*

In 1384, the first known internal document issued by a Moldavian ruler mentions the residence of Petru I's mother in *villa Horleganoio*. The name seems to indicate both the future town of Hârlău, and the village of Horlăceni. Document editors leaned towards the second

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<sup>280</sup> Paul Paltănea, "Informații despre evoluția demografică și a teritoriului orașului Galați până în 1918 (I)," *AILAI*, vol. XIV, no. 1 (1987), pp. 125–126.

<sup>281</sup> Paul Paltănea, *Istoria orașului Galați. De la origini până în 1918*, vol. I (Galați, 1994), pp. 42–43.

<sup>282</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 202.

<sup>283</sup> DIR, XVII, A, V, p. 154, doc. 215; p. 217, doc. 290.

<sup>284</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, p. 180.

<sup>285</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 110; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 227; Paltănea, *Istoria orașului*, pp. 65, 102.

<sup>286</sup> *Documente și însemnări*, p. 155, doc. 62.

alternative, but it was a theory that did not resonate with all scholar opinion.<sup>287</sup> The village of Horlăceni was closer to Siret, but traces of any significant building or church have yet to be revealed here. The document makes direct reference to a village (*villa*), and Hârlău was probably more than a rural settlement at that point. New sources lacking, this is still open to debate. Several years later, in 1398, Hârlău is mentioned beyond any doubt, since it is associated with the name of a grand boyar, Bârlă.<sup>288</sup> Like Mihail from Dorohoi, Bârlă attends the ruler's council long before his name had been associated with the town, even from the 1384 on. In a confirmation of the homage promised by Petru I to the king of Poland, Bârlă is second, as only major figures of the country could have been.<sup>289</sup> The link between Bârlă and Hârlău is similar to that between Mihail and Dorohoi: the grand boyar was appointed judge for the ruler, as a token of gratitude for his services.

Hârlău had a major country residence, one preferred by the rulers, who lived here on several occasions.<sup>290</sup> The age of this residence, originally a small stronghold, was recently underlined by the discovery of traces of two older churches under the church of St George (1492).<sup>291</sup> They are not precisely dated: the later seems to be from Alexandru the Good's reign, while the former, from the 14th century. An exact timeline for these buildings is very much tied with archaeological results.

As in Baia, the age of Hârlău is backed up by the double name of the town. In 15th–16th century documents, the town is noted both as Hârlău, and as *Civitas Bachlovia*, “the town of Bahlui”, a river on whose valley it stood.<sup>292</sup> Of the two names, the latter is the old one and identified Hârlău as a regional centre. Another town, Iași, emerged on the Bahlui, close to where it joined the river Jijia. If we were to compare the towns that emerged on the same river valley (Baia-Roman, Pietra lui Crăciun-Bacău, Argeș-Pitești), we may notice that those upstream are older (Baia, Pietra, Argeș), and this also seems to apply to Hârlău-

<sup>287</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1; opposing views in *Podgoria Cotnari*, pp. 161–162 and Moldovanu, *Toponimia Moldovei*, pp. XL–XLI.

<sup>288</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 7, doc. 6.

<sup>289</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 601, doc. 163.

<sup>290</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, pp. XI–XXXVIII; *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 12, 21; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 106, 134; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 417, doc. 178). For the finds of archaeological excavations in the princely palace, see Cheptea, *Un oraș*, pp. 128–160.

<sup>291</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor 2001*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>292</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 342, doc. 153; p. 408, doc. 175; Grigoraș, “Despre orașul,” p. 93.

Iași. The two settlements were part of different political structures: Iași was long under Mongol control or influence, while Hârlău avoided this earlier on. In the 15th century, the names *Bachlovia* and Hârlău alternate in documents: in January 1477, Ștefan the Great issues a document “from Hârlău”, only to issue another a few days later “from Bahlovia”.<sup>293</sup>

After having been conquered by the armies of King Louis or by one of the first rulers of Moldavia, the area where Hârlău was located was organized as a county, which had its administrative centre here.<sup>294</sup> Prior to 1400, Hârlău sees Catholic settlers coming in, Saxons and Hungarians, who were lured by the privileges offered. This point in time for the colonists moving in is supported by the Hungarian origin of the new town name. The *-ău* ending, specific to many Transylvanian settlements as well, places the town among centres with Hungarian names.<sup>295</sup> Since the name Hârlău is first mentioned in 1398, we must set the arrival of the settlers who borrowed it its name at least two decades before on the timeline.<sup>296</sup> One such name would not have entered the mainstream or the documents over night.

We have no clues as to how they were settled, but we may assume it was by *locatio*. The presence of the term *miasto* in connection to the townspeople in Hârlău confirms they enjoyed privileged status.<sup>297</sup> Town outlines show that the settlement followed two parallel streets, a system encountered in other Moldavian towns as well.<sup>298</sup> The town marketplace, shaped as a square, was at the end of the two streets, in front of the ruler’s residence. One part of its pavement surfaced during recent excavations. A moat, that documents certify but has yet to be discovered, surrounded the settlement.<sup>299</sup>

Settlers were also brought by the prospect of good business, especially since there were plenty of vineyards here. As in neighbouring Cotnari, vinegrowing and wineselling were among the basic endeavours of the townspeople. The presence, but also the position of colonists in the community, is confirmed by a group travelling to the Constance council (1415). They came from *Bahlo*, mistakenly identified

<sup>293</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, pp. 341–342, doc. 152–153.

<sup>294</sup> Gorovei, “Istoria în palimpsest,” pp. 171–172; Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 216.

<sup>295</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 236; *Podgoria Cotnari*, pp. 163–164.

<sup>296</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 7, doc. 6.

<sup>297</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 438, doc. 246.

<sup>298</sup> Cheptea, *Un oraș*, pp. 58, 241, fig. 4a.

<sup>299</sup> Cheptea, *Un oraș*, pp. 42–44, 59.

by Karadja with Bacău, but which was in fact Hârlău.<sup>300</sup> When compared to other towns, Hârlău has more townspeople with Hungarian and German names recorded in documents. They were probably predominant in the population of the town until after the Reform.<sup>301</sup> They had at least one church, whose early disappearance makes it difficult to identify the location of their neighbourhood.<sup>302</sup> It was probably in the northern half of the town, near the marketplace and the ruler's palace. The Romanian quarter was south, where the Orthodox Church of St Demetrius was.<sup>303</sup> The *șoltuz* of Hârlău is also certified only late.<sup>304</sup>

Most medieval texts documenting the town speak of its main resource, vineyards. The inhabitants had clusters of vineyards in what documents call “the hill of Hârlău,” while the ruler had vineyards on “the hill of the prince.”<sup>305</sup> Ever since 1448, Petru II donated to the monastery at Probota a small portion of the wine he derived from Hârlău.<sup>306</sup> A special feature is that monasteries and boyars begin purchasing vineyards here earlier than in Cotnari.<sup>307</sup> In most cases, the townspeople are the ones selling, as it happened in 1470, when six inhabitants (five with Hungarian names) even sell a vineyard to Ștefan the Great, and he donates it to a monastery.<sup>308</sup> The interest of the church in owning vineyards is related to the ceremonial side of wine, but also to the substantial income it provided.<sup>309</sup> The same taxes were levied in the town marketplace, but, like Cotnari, Hârlău had no customs house either. A major road passed through it, linking Iași to Suceava or Hotin, but the ruler saw fit to create a taxing spot for merchants further south, in Târgul Frumos. The town begins its decline in the latter half of the 17th century.

<sup>300</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” pp. 70–71, 82–83.

<sup>301</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 247, doc. 166; III, p. 433, doc. 244; p. 438, doc. 246.

<sup>302</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, p. 181.

<sup>303</sup> Cheptea, *Un oraș*, pp. 195–197.

<sup>304</sup> DIR, XVII, A, IV, p. 326, doc. 408; p. 508, doc. 644.

<sup>305</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 144, doc. 75; p. 507, doc. 285; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 236, doc. 291; p. 238, doc. 293.

<sup>306</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288; II, p. 34, doc. 26.

<sup>307</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 223, doc. 153.

<sup>308</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 247, doc. 166.

<sup>309</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 55, doc. 34; p. 144, doc. 75; p. 433, doc. 244; p. 438, doc. 246.

*Hotin*

The town of Hotin stands among the urban settlements that grew out of suburbs adjoining strongholds. In the latter half of the 13th century, a stone fortification was erected by a ford of the Dniester. It is difficult to identify the ruler of the stronghold at that time, since it was in a buffer zone between the Galician Rus' and Romanian land. Victor Spinei rejects the reliance of Hotin on the Galician Rus', claiming that, if this were so, the stronghold and the nearby settlement would have been merged into Poland in 1349, and we have no records showing this to be true.<sup>310</sup> King Casimir III managed to bring under his reign the eastern reaches of the Galician Rus' barely in 1366–1367,<sup>311</sup> so it is hard to say who ruled the stronghold between 1349 and 1366/1367. Given its fringe location, Hotin became a matter of contention between Moldavia and Poland. Since the end of the 14th century, the stronghold passed from one party to the other.

The Hotin area was visited by merchants ever since the 13th century. This is supported by the discovery of a large treasure trove, with almost 1000 pieces of Central-European origin, issued over a large period of time (latter half of the 12th century—c. 1230).<sup>312</sup> The first certification of the town is still debated. In 1310, an Italian account mentions a certain bishop of *Chocina*, which is believed to be an altered form of Hotin.<sup>313</sup> We do not know for sure when the town first came under Moldavian control. The Kiev list (1387–1396) mentions Hotin along with other Moldavian strongholds, so it was released from Polish rule in or before 1387.<sup>314</sup> The transfer of the stronghold and of the town were most likely negotiated before Petru I pledged loyalty to the king of Poland, in 1387. A later document confirms this theory. In 1436, Ilie I is forced to reimburse Poland for the damages created in the kingdom by his father's incursion, Alexandru the Good. The ruler gives Șepeniț back to the king, stating that: "we hereby give the Land of Șepeniț, that the Land of Moldavia had from the Crown, with all the towns of this true Land of Șepeniț, namely Hotin, Țețina, and Hmielov, along with all the counties, towns, villages, we give in kind and in restitution." The

<sup>310</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 265.

<sup>311</sup> Knoll, *The Rise*, pp. 155–173.

<sup>312</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 122–126.

<sup>313</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 242.

<sup>314</sup> *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

same document goes on to mention that the ruler would also give back “all the letters [...] that our forebears had from the king of Poland,” specifically, the donation documents for these territories, which thereby lost validity.<sup>315</sup> Only the shifting vassal relations may explain why Poland reclaimed the stronghold periodically.

Hotin remained a trading item in Moldavian-Polish relations, the stronghold being usually left to loyal rulers (Alexandru II, for instance), and taken from those who proved unworthy.<sup>316</sup> After being assured of Ilie’s loyalty, the king grants Hotin as an appanage to Mary, the Polish wife of the former.<sup>317</sup> After Ștefan II overthrows Ilie, Mary again transfers the stronghold to Poland, requesting domains in the kingdom as reimbursement (1444).<sup>318</sup> In 1455, Petru Aron was willing to conclude an exchange: Siret would become an appanage for Mary, while Hotin was to be returned to Moldavia.<sup>319</sup> Even though Petru officially acknowledges the transfer of Siret in 1456, the issue of Hotin remains on the table.<sup>320</sup> In the early days of his reign, Ștefan the Great accepted that the stronghold was to be tied to the Poles as well (1459); finally, the king agreed to transfer it to Moldavia (1463–1464), following an agreement that records have not mentioned.<sup>321</sup>

Originally, both the stronghold and the town were transferred by the king. Still, after 1432, Poland periodically regained only the stronghold, and not the town as well. The 1408 privileges, along with the 1434, 1456 or 1460 acknowledgements, show that the customs house where the Kamieniec road entered Moldavia remained in the town of Hotin.<sup>322</sup> The Dniester treaty signed by Ștefan the Great and the envoys of King Casimir IV in 1459 also shows only the stronghold to be under Polish command, but not the town too (called an *oppidum*). The document stated the right of the fortress denizens to come into the town market (*foro*) in search of wood and other products, provided they paid customs and passage duty for Moldavia.<sup>323</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 706, doc. 203.

<sup>316</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 465; II, p. 45, doc. 33; p. 489.

<sup>317</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 779, doc. 230.

<sup>318</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 721, doc. 209.

<sup>319</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 773, doc. 228.

<sup>320</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 779, doc. 230.

<sup>321</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 266, doc. 126; DRH, A, II, p. 169, doc. 119; Gorovei, Székely, “*Princeps omni laude maior*”, pp. 38–40.

<sup>322</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; p. 667, doc. 186; p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>323</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 266, doc. CXXVI.

We know only few things about the Hotin community. It likely had Catholics too, colonists. The legend of the town seal has the word *miasto*, suggesting a foreign group that received a privilege.<sup>324</sup> The Catholic (probably German) settlers were joined by Armenians, that we would find in great numbers in nearby Kamieniec. In 1551, their church is destroyed following the banishment commanded by Ștefan Rareș.<sup>325</sup> In 1619, the *voit* and the *pârgari* in town are witnesses in a domain sale, and this is the first time a leader of the townspeople is mentioned.<sup>326</sup>

### *Huși*

Due to its name, the dawn of Huși's history has been ascribed to the Hussites. The persecutions they underwent in Bohemia, Moravia or Hungary had some of them migrate east.<sup>327</sup> The first arrivals in Moldavia are mentioned around 1420 in the *Levoča Chronicle*, and probably consisted of Slovaks and Hungarians.<sup>328</sup> Alexandru the Good allowed them to settle in his towns. A letter by bishop John of Ryza tells us that the ruler protected them, granting privileges and providing a settling ground in Bacău.<sup>329</sup> Another wave of Hussites came from Hungary in 1437 and settled in Trotuș; the final arrivals were under Ștefan the Great's reign (c. 1481–1488).<sup>330</sup> A letter by the patriarch in Constantinople to the University in Prague documents the Hussites "living in Moldavia, where they took refuge" (1452).<sup>331</sup>

The Hussites converted some of the Catholics around. With the heresy threatening to spread even further, Pope Eugene IV appointed Fabian of Backa as an inquisitor for the Romanian Principalities, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia in 1446. Of all the countries noted, Moldavia is the only one detailed by the statement that it was

<sup>324</sup> Ciurea, "Sigiliile medievale," p. 162, fig. 6.

<sup>325</sup> Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire*, p. 39.

<sup>326</sup> DIR, XVII, A, IV, p. 320, doc. 399.

<sup>327</sup> Details on the Hussite movement in Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1967).

<sup>328</sup> Dan, *Cehi*, pp. 84–88; Dobre, "Preaching," p. 82.

<sup>329</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 64–65; Papacostea, "Știri noi," pp. 279–286.

<sup>330</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 94; Manolescu, "Cultura orășenească în Moldova," pp. 84–86. Dan, *Cehi*, pp. 99–104, 196–206.

<sup>331</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, "Husitismul și cultura slavonă în Moldova," *Romanoslavica*, vol X (1964), pp. 282–283.



inhabited by “a great many people of heretical wanderings, and even more so, part of a large sect called the Hussites.” Concubinage had extended among parish priests and even among Church officials, so the requested firm action from the inquisitor to put an end to these practices.<sup>332</sup> The Hussite activity lost impetus after 1460, but the stage was set to draw Catholics here to the Reform.<sup>333</sup> Unfortunately, sources mention no direct Hussite presence through all this period in Huși.

Going back to the town name, historians divided into two camps. Some claim this name to be a definite testimony to a group of Hussites settling here, who are even believed to be founders of this settlement.<sup>334</sup> Other historians ascribe the origin of the town name to the name of a person, Husul, allegedly derived from Slavonic and meaning “goose.”<sup>335</sup> One Husu is even mentioned in several 15th century documents, but he had domains nearby, not in town. What we know for a fact is that the ruler brought colonists from Transylvania here: Hungarians in the future town of Huși and Romanians in nearby villages.<sup>336</sup> The south-east area of Moldavia has Hungarians present in Bârlad, Vaslui, and Iași as well, where they seem to be the minority. However, in Huși, the missionaries visiting after the painful impact of the Reform mention Hungarians in vast numbers, the bulk of the community.<sup>337</sup> Several details support the Hussite theory. Despite having meanwhile returned to Catholicism (c. 1571–1591),<sup>338</sup> Franciscan Andrei Bogoslavič calls the inhabitants of Huși “Hussites” and claims there were still people who required that they receive the Eucharist under *utraque specie*.<sup>339</sup> Even more compelling is the only description of the town seal left to us by Melchisedec in the 19th century: an open book, with a single and double cross on the edges.<sup>340</sup> The symbol of the book can be associated with the Hussite beginnings of the town, the book suggesting the Bible. The origins of the community were

<sup>332</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 388, doc. 278.

<sup>333</sup> Dobre, “Preaching,” p. 85.

<sup>334</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 191.

<sup>335</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 247–249; *Istoria Hușilor*, ed. Theodor Codreanu (Galați, 1995), pp. 43–56.

<sup>336</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Bogdan*, vol. II, p. 3, doc. 1; also p. 5 and 245; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță*, p. 134, doc. 27.

<sup>337</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 27, 75–76, 438; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 92.

<sup>338</sup> Dan, *Cehi*, pp. 276–277.

<sup>339</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 7.

<sup>340</sup> Melchisedec, *Chronica Hușilor și a episcopiei cu asemenea numire* (Bucharest, 1869), pp. 132–133.

known among locals. Bishop Petru Bakšić also mentions the former Hussites here and their unique way of receiving the Eucharist, while Marco Bandini even relates a story that circulated thereabout, placing the arrival of some Hungarian Hussites after 1460, following the oppressive action taken by Matthias Corvinus.<sup>341</sup> We would still have to clarify the coincidence between the town name, the presence of said Husul and the Hungarians who kept the tradition of them being adepts of the Hussite movement, as well as their specifically Hussite customs.

The chronic lack of sources is yet another obstacle in dating the emergence of the community and the way the town developed. Local tradition and cursory excavations show that Ștefan the Great build a small palace here.<sup>342</sup> Its buildings were erected at the outskirts, in a place where excavations did not reveal any traces of previous habitation.<sup>343</sup> Two theories regarding the emergence of the town are possible. The first would credit Ștefan the Great with it, who granted the town its privilege, especially since a final group of Hussites arrived here during his reign. A second one dates the foundation of the town in the former half of the 15th century. Many residences for Moldavian rulers have been archaeologically tested to reveal an even older date of foundation. Huși was not the focus of any vast research, so we cannot yet rule out a possible local residence existing here ever since Alexandru the Good, who probably erected those nearby as well, in Vaslui and Bârlad. We are looking forward to the next excavations; they will either confirm or reject this. We tend to believe that the one settling some of the Hussites in Huși was Alexandru the Good. A 16th century Hungarian source is proof to this, stating that the Hussites left for Moldavia under Sigismund of Luxemburg; Alexandru let them found a town, and they settled in Huși (*Hussvárosnak*).<sup>344</sup> A 1452 internal document mentions Vadul Hușilor and another settlement called Husul, but this source is a garbled translation into Romanian from later days.<sup>345</sup> We must however note that Huși developed as town later than Fălcui, which became a residence for the county by the same name, that both

<sup>341</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 229.

<sup>342</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 379, doc. 168.

<sup>343</sup> Al. Andronic, Eugenia Neamțu, “Săpăturile de salvare de la Huși, jud. Vaslui (1984),” *MCA*, vol. 10 (1973), pp. 275–280; Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 381; Nicolescu, *Arta*, pp. 324–338.

<sup>344</sup> C. C. Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 249–250.

<sup>345</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 22, doc. 20.

towns were a part of. The emergence of Huși can also be related to the decline of Târgul Săratei, located on the other bank of the Prut river.<sup>346</sup> The palace in Huși became one of the favourites of the rulers after 1500, thus entering the ranks of secondary ruler's residences, like Hârlău or Vaslui.<sup>347</sup>

The birth and development of the town were very much the product of a pursuit common to Cotnari: vinegrowing. The area is covered in vineyards, and the ruler sought to attract here skilled winemakers, especially since this was a major source of income. It was no accident that Huși had no customs house either. Further testimonies to support the theory that settlers were the creators of the town are the short 17th century descriptions of the town by Bartolomeo Bassetti, bishop Petru Bakšić or Marco Bandini. They document the Catholic church (Dormition of Holy Mary) and the numbers of parishioners. When referring to the Romanian population, at that time still smaller than the Catholic one, it notes it did not live in town, but on the outskirts.<sup>348</sup> The group of Hungarians was settled ever since the first days near the central market and close to the ruler's residence, which became the see of a recently founded Orthodox bishopric in the 16th century.<sup>349</sup> The medieval town core was then in the Catholic area, while the Romanian population was later added, creating the neighbourhoods adjacent to the core (as in Cotnari).

The inhabitants of Huși were the beneficiaries of a privilege which allowed them to elect a *șoltuz*.<sup>350</sup> He was probably elected among the Hungarians first, but, as the Romanians increased in number, the *șoltuzes* began being elected among them too (by alternation).<sup>351</sup> The main pursuit of inhabitants was viticulture.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Costică Asăvoaic, "Târgul Sărății—un târg dispărut?," *AM*, vol. 20 (1999), pp. 203–206.

<sup>347</sup> *DIR*, XVI, A, I, pp. IX–XIII; XIX–XXXVI.

<sup>348</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 179, 228–229; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 92; Melchisedec, *Chronica Hușilor*, pp. 393–394, 416.

<sup>349</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 100; *DIR*, XVII, A, I, p. 28, doc. 42.

<sup>350</sup> *DIR*, XVII, A, II, p. 32, doc. 33; p. 188, doc. 250.

<sup>351</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 92.

<sup>352</sup> *DIR*, XVI, A, II, p. 147, doc. 139.

*Iași*

An ancient rural settlement once stood where Iași developed. The ceramic and metal items uncovered here show that, in early 14th century, the settlement entered a pre-urban stage. Unlike similar settlements in Baia, Suceava or Siret, this one had a major shortcoming: its location, further east, close to the Prut, on the fringes of Mongol-controlled land. This was why urbanization was drawn out towards the 1400s. However, a ruler's residence created here hastened the process.

The date of the first mention for the town was much debated. Many years have been proposed, among them 1395, present in a inscription in the town's Armenian church of St Mary (rebuilt in 1803). Many scholars challenge the validity of this inscription, since the Armenians kept track of time by their own calendar, which begins in year 551 of the Gregorian calendar.<sup>353</sup> Despite the probable forgery at hand, this does not mean the Armenians were not already present in Iași at the end of the 14th century. They had arrived in other Moldavian towns, where they had churches, as one 1401 document shows.<sup>354</sup> Under the name of "Târgul Iașilor, on the Prut" (in fact, the town is on the Bahlui, several kilometres away), the settlement is noted in the Kiev list. The name of *târg* shows it to be in a pre-urban stage.<sup>355</sup> There are three theories worthy of consideration when determining the origin of the town name. The first one sees it as derived from *Jassi*, a name given to the Alans by the Russians, and the second one sees it as an eponym, Iași from a certain *Iaș* (a person's name derived from John or Jacob), the founder or lord of the settlement.<sup>356</sup> Another theory believes the name comes from the name given in medieval Hungary to a category of archers.<sup>357</sup> Even more historians insist that the town and the *Jassi* were connected. Arguments favouring this are provided by the way the town is noted in sources. The 1412 treaty of Lublau calls the town *forum Iaszkytarg*, while in 1415, the Constance council is also attended by townspeople from Iași (*Ieszmarckl*) and Baia, which the

<sup>353</sup> Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, pp. 45–47.

<sup>354</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 21, doc. 14.

<sup>355</sup> *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>356</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, pp. 169, 274–275; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 253–255; Andronic, *Iași*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>357</sup> C. Cihodaru, "Începuturile vieții orașenești la Iași," *Analele Științifice ale Universității Al. I. Cuza Iași. Istorie*, vol. XVII (1971), pp. 41–43; Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, pp. 29–31.

author refers to by the phrase *di zvu seind philistei* (“where Philistines live”).<sup>358</sup> In his chronicle, Jan Długosz mentions the town in a similar form: *Jaszky Targ in Pruth, alias Philistimorum Forum*.<sup>359</sup> Finally, under the name of *foro Philistinorum*, Iași also features as the place where some documents were issued, and bears the same name in the 1475 treaty between Ștefan the Great and Matthias Corvinus.<sup>360</sup> Virgil Ciocâltan states that, in the 13th–14th centuries, the *Jassi* stood out as mercenaries, being hired by the Bulgarians, Hungarians, and even rulers of the Romanian Principalities.<sup>361</sup> They left many traces in Romanian-inhabited land; among them, one near Argeș, where the name of Valea Iașului was kept. Since research shows that, in Iași and Argeș, before the emergence of states was complete, there was a centre of power, the link between the mercenary *Jassi* and local political residences does not seem accidental. A harder task would be determining whether they came as representatives for the Mongols, the Hungarian king or the first rulers of Moldavia.<sup>362</sup> The first option seems more likely. The shape of the county of Iași is indicative of the Mongolian link: even though the town was west of the Prut, much of its county territory is east of the river and was until late considered a part of the Lower Country.<sup>363</sup>

The presence of the Alans in the Principality area is certified only by narrative sources and toponymy. In Iași, archaeological research confirm the existence of a settlement ever since the 14th century, but do not shed any light on the ethnicity of the inhabitants. Internal documents reveal a well-outlined social hierarchy in the area. Renate Möhlenkamp identified one Stoian Procelnic as an influential character, who owned several villages near Iași.<sup>364</sup> Unlike Mihail from Dorohoi or Bârlă from Hârlău, Stoian is never directly linked to the town. He controlled the area south-east of the future town, crossed by the road linking Iași to the land under direct Mongol control.<sup>365</sup>

<sup>358</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 483, doc. CCCCI; Karadja, “Delegații,” pp. 69, 82–83.

<sup>359</sup> Długossi, *Annales seu cronicae*, vol. I, p. 83.

<sup>360</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 412, doc. 301; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 334, doc. 146.

<sup>361</sup> Spinci, *Moldova*, pp. 245–46; Ciocâltan, “Alanii,” pp. 935–939.

<sup>362</sup> Ciocâltan, “Alanii,” pp. 939–949; Ciocâltan, *Mongolii*, p. 236; Möhlenkamp, “Contribuții,” pp. 62–67.

<sup>363</sup> Costin, *Poema polonă*, p. 216; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, pp. 154–159.

<sup>364</sup> Möhlenkamp, “Contribuții,” pp. 68–71.

<sup>365</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 155, doc. 80.

The area entered the dominion of the Moldavian rulers in the latter half of the 14th century. While the existence of the settlement in Iași is proven by many discoveries, the most ancient traces of the ruler's residence date back to the former half of the 15th century, Alexandru the Good's reign.<sup>366</sup> A thorough investigation of the site where Alexandru's palace stood is nowadays hindered by buildings, so the theory that an older fortalice existed here must be delayed until receiving archaeological confirmation. However, we do believe that such a centre of authority existed earlier on, since this was the core sparking the urbanization process. The topography of the town is certainly influenced by the position of the palace.<sup>367</sup> The main streets start and end here, and it was in relation to it that the marketplaces and the neighbourhoods were outlined. Unlike Suceava, Iași has shown no evidence of town dwellings being evacuated to make room for the ruler's residence.<sup>368</sup>

The importance of the settlement is also proven by the fact that this was where the two main alternate routes of the "Moldavian route" converged: the one from Hotin, travelling along the Prut valley, and another from Suceava, via Hârlău. From Iași, the road followed on towards the Dniester and Cetatea Albă. They were joined by the road coming from Transylvania, via Bacău and Roman, and the south-bound one, via Vaslui and Bârlad, which also converged in the great crossroads in Iași. The town also has a customs house created for Polish merchants (1408).<sup>369</sup>

Groups of colonists also came to Iași. Northwest of the residence, there were several dwellings, as well as grey ceramic, resembling the one found in Suceava, Bacău or Roman.<sup>370</sup> As everywhere in Moldavia, this type of ceramic is attributed to German craftsmen. They settled not far from the residence, on one side of the Main Street (*Ulița Mare*). They also had their own street and a church (Dormition of the Holy

<sup>366</sup> Al. Andronic, Eugenia Neamțu, M. Dinu, "Săpăturile arheologice de la curtea domnească din Iași," *AM*, vol. 5 (1967), pp. 198–206; Andronic, *Iași*, pp. 17–19, 46–51; DRH, A, I, p. 183, doc. 130; p. 187, doc. 134.

<sup>367</sup> Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, p. 44.

<sup>368</sup> Alexandru Andronic, "Începuturile vieții urbane la Iași," *Carpica* (Bacău) vol. 5 (1972) pp. 173–174.

<sup>369</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>370</sup> Andronic, *Iași*, pp. 36, 49–50; Stela Cheptea, "Șase veacuri de istorie," in *Catedrala romano-catolică Iași*, ed. Dănuț Doboș (Iași, 2005), pp. 11–23.

Virgin) in their neighbourhood.<sup>371</sup> The community was rather important since it sent its representatives to the Constance council, as shown above. Marco Bandini relates that the church and its properties were looked after by the parishioners, who were entitled to choose their own priest.<sup>372</sup> On one side of the Old Street (*Ulița Veche*), the Armenian group took residence, and also received its own church and street.<sup>373</sup> As in Baia, Cotnari, and Huși, the Germans and the Armenians were placed in the central area, on the lands that were free or had been released around 1400.<sup>374</sup> Archaeological research has shown that townspeople were also grouped across their pursuits. A potters' neighbourhood has been uncovered at the edges of the inhabited area.<sup>375</sup> Mongol slaves were settled outside town, in at least two villages: Geamiri and Tătărași.<sup>376</sup>

The town marketplace was created in front of the ruler's residence and east of it. The area in front of the palace walls was a public display for the ruler's power: it was here that he sometimes held trial, and it was also here that felons were hung by the neck.<sup>377</sup> The commercial marketplace was east of the palace (*Târgul de Jos*).<sup>378</sup> It was here that the Russian Street is certified (*Ulița Rusească*),<sup>379</sup> so the Ruthenians, Germans, and Armenians settled as near the palace as possible, suggesting a conscious outline. The rest of the town was probably inhabited by Romanians. A first question arises where the Romanians (and the Ruthenians) are concerned: which one was their church? The church of St Nicholas by the palace was the ruler's church and served his spiritual needs. Another possibility is a church that has succumbed to time. Between Russian Street and Old Street there stretched the Street of St Vineri, which borrowed its name from a church.<sup>380</sup> The medieval man was used to naming streets by the ethnic or craftsmen group that

<sup>371</sup> DIR, XVII, IV, p. 434, doc. 563; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 524; vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, p. 178; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 256.

<sup>372</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 256–258, 272.

<sup>373</sup> DIR, XVII, II, p. 339, doc. 452; *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 523–524; vol. V, pp. 178–179; Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, pp. 45–48.

<sup>374</sup> Stela Cheptea, “Din nou despre începuturile Iașilor,” HU, vol. V, no. 2 (1997), pp. 160–162.

<sup>375</sup> Andronic, *Iași*, pp. 16–17, 38–39.

<sup>376</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 268, doc. 182.

<sup>377</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, pp. 131–132, 352; vol. III, p. 182.

<sup>378</sup> DIR, XVII, A, IV, p. 419, doc. 541; Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, pp. 37–39.

<sup>379</sup> *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Iași*, vol. I, p. 244, doc. 179.

<sup>380</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 477.

lived there or by the church located on that street. A church dedicated to St Paraskevi (also called St Vineri) was built near the marketplace and was probably the oldest Orthodox church in town. The central marketplace united the Old, St Vineri and Russian streets, which ran parallel, another indication of an rigorous outline.<sup>381</sup>

The local *târg* in Iași had to complete two steps to become a real town: sufficient economic development and the granting of privileged status for the inhabitants. The 1408 document and archaeological research confirm that the settlement had grown economically and took advantage of the country's open policy towards trade. As for the privilege granted to inhabitants, preserved sources do not hint at who granted it and under what terms. The granter was probably the same Alexandru the Good, who also gave the privileges in Vaslui and Bârlad.<sup>382</sup> This ruler was interested in supporting the development of towns in the Lower Country, which followed closely after those in the northwest. The privilege granted to the community in Iași coalesced the status of various ethnic groups in town, bringing them on the same level. The ruler had no difficulty in doing this, since all the settlers were his subjects, and the settlement was on princely domain.

There was a moat between the palace and the town, at least until the 16th century, which drew a boundary between the ruler's area of authority and that of the town.<sup>383</sup> As in Suceava, a second moat with a defensive palisade surrounded the urban enclosure.<sup>384</sup> In 1491–1492, Ștefan the Great rebuilds the palace and the adjoining church, each having their yard and walls.<sup>385</sup> By the end of the 15th century, the town was famous enough to feature as *Iastriter* on the Nicolaus Cusanus' map (the 1491 copy).<sup>386</sup> Almost all rulers who followed resided in Iași, the town being kept from outside attacks for a while. It was only set on fire in 1513 by the Mongols.<sup>387</sup> During his second reign, Alexandru

<sup>381</sup> See the Russian outlines of the town in 1769 and 1790 attached in *Documente privitoare la istoria economică a României. Orașe și Târguri*, series A, *Moldova*, vol. II, ed. Gh. Ungureanu (Bucharest, 1960); *Călători străini*, vol. VIII, p. 343.

<sup>382</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; DRH, A, III, p. 279, doc. 151; Renate Möhlenkamp, "Réflexions concernant les débuts de la ville de Vaslui," *AIIAI*, vol. XVIII (1981), pp. 4–16.

<sup>383</sup> Andronic, Neamțu, Dinu, "Săpăturile arheologice," p. 207.

<sup>384</sup> Andronic, *Iași*, pp. 38, 53–54.

<sup>385</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, pp. 407, 467, Nicolescu, *Arta*, pp. 325–326; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 258.

<sup>386</sup> Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria*, vol. I, pp. 92–96; vol. II, map 35.

<sup>387</sup> *Cronicle slavo-române*, pp. 172, 182.



Lăpușneanu decides to take residence here, leaving Suceava as only his secondary residence.<sup>388</sup>

The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* are certified after 1500, but they certainly existed at least since the previous century.<sup>389</sup> The hills around the town favoured viticulture. Some of the names of these hills are Hungarian in origin (Copou, Țicău), suggesting the presence of artisans coming from beyond the mountains here.<sup>390</sup> The sales or donations of vineyards are frequent, winemaking and selling being the main pursuit of some of the inhabitants, along with trade and crafts.<sup>391</sup>

### *Kilia*

On the mouth of the Danube, Kilia was at an even greater advantage, thanks to Genovese merchants. A settlement with Byzantine origins existed here in the 13th century, and was mentioned in the 1241 invasion. Along with the residence of Bulgarian emperors in Târnovo, the Mongols supposedly conquered another major town, called *Kīla*.<sup>392</sup> Along with Kaliakra, Silistra, Kavarna and Licostomo, Kilia is mentioned in a list of estates (*castella*) for the Constantinople Patriarchy (c. 1318–1323).<sup>393</sup> Two decades later, a foray by Turkish pirate Umur Beg d'Aydin ravaged the settlement (c. 1337–1338). The attack was meant to shatter the Mongol foothold in the area, but it missed its purpose apparently, since the Mongols regained control over the Byzantine centres by the Lower Danube, Kilia and Vicina included.<sup>394</sup>

Kilia is at the heart of a vast historiographical dispute on its location. Octavian Iliescu showed that two fortresses existed by the mouth of the Danube: an older, Byzantine stronghold, called Licostomo, on an island where the Kilia river branch flowed into the sea, and another Kilia, further within, on the waterway. Sources mention the two both

<sup>388</sup> Bădărău, Caproșu, *Iași*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>389</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, p. 365, doc. 222; DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 211, doc. 265.

<sup>390</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 328–329; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 250.

<sup>391</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 232, doc. 157.

<sup>392</sup> Decei, “L’invasion des tatars,” pp. 120–121. See also Denis Deletant, “Genovese,” p. 519.

<sup>393</sup> *Acta et diplomata graeca*, vol. I, p. 95, doc. LII–II.

<sup>394</sup> Information from *Düsturnâme-i Enveri*, a rhymed Turkish chronicle (Alexandrescu-Dersca, “L’expédition,” pp. 13–23; *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 36–37).

separately and together.<sup>395</sup> Their precise location is still undetermined (whether on islands or not, on which bank of the river, etc).<sup>396</sup> The very dynamic geography of the Danube Delta area brought permanent modifications to the landscape, so only ruins of the stronghold in Kilia Nouă remained to this day. Medieval portulans are not too helpful either, since they place Licostomo alternatively on the right, and on the left Danube bank, the branch of the river being initially called Licostomo, and then Kilia.<sup>397</sup> Giurescu believed only one town existed, with its core near Licostomo, a town that later spread to cover the left bank of the Danube, where a trade route from the west had its end point.<sup>398</sup> Petre Diaconu holds similar views, claiming that Licostomo can be identified as Kilia and only one settlement with two names existed.<sup>399</sup> We do have our reserves, but we find more plausible the theory that the medieval town was in Kilia, while Licostomo was a fortress monitoring the navigation on the place Danube joined the sea. A reasonable explanation for why notaries overseeing and writing trade papers used two different names for one settlement is hard to find, all the more so if they knew this could have led to confusions. Research into modern maps shows the Danube Delta to have extended especially beyond the modern-day town of Vylkove (Vâlcov), where a secondary delta begins. In the Middle Ages, this was where the river flowed into the sea, and this is where Licostomo probably stood. *Lycostomion* is Greek for “mouth of the wolf,” and the name of Vylkove has similar resonance, since it has as its root the Slavonic *vâlc*, “wolf.” The name of Kilia is derived from Greek *kellion*, which has two meanings: a chamber in a monastery and a warehouse. The last meaning is related to the intense trade activity in this town in the Middle

<sup>395</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 76, doc. 45; p. 130, doc. 74; p. 167, doc. 92; Balard, *Gènes*, tom II, p. 42, doc. 12; p. 46, doc. 14; pp. 52–57, doc. 18–22; see also *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 15–16.

<sup>396</sup> Licostomo was supposedly aligned with present-day Periprava; the town of Vylkove developed later on the other bank of the Danube (Iliescu, “Localizarea,” pp. 452–453, 457; Iliescu, “Nouvelles contributions,” pp. 236–258). For location and discussions, also see: Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 214–218; V. Ciocâltan, “Chilia în primul sfert al secolului al XV-lea,” *RDI*, vol. 34, no. 11 (1981), pp. 2091–2096; Gh. Pungă, “Considerații privitoare la cetatea Chilia Nouă,” in *Studii de istorie medievală și de științe auxiliare* (Iași, 1999), pp. 85–104; Andreescu, *Dim istoria*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>397</sup> *The portolan chart; Sea charts*, doc. 7 and 9.

<sup>398</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 218–219.

<sup>399</sup> Petre Diaconu, “Kilia et Licostomo ou Kilia=Licostomo?,” *RRH*, vol. XXV, no. 4 (1986), pp. 301–317; Petre Diaconu, “Kilia et Licostomo, un faux problème de géographie historique,” in *Il Mar Nero* (Roma-Paris) vol. II (1995–1996), pp. 235–263.

Ages.<sup>400</sup> The 14th century saw Licostomo as having a mainly military and strategic purpose, while Kilia had an economic one.<sup>401</sup>

Kilia, as well as the Wallachian Brăila, developed at the expense of their rival town, Vicina. Following the Genovese-Byzantine war of 1351–1352, the Genovese took advantage and reinforced their foothold in towns on the north-west Black Sea coast, Kilia included.<sup>402</sup> For a while, up until 1368–1369, Kilia is still in the shackles of Mongol rule (probably represented by Demetrius), who charged fees for trade exchanges in the harbour. Information in the 1360–1361 registry of Genovese notary Antonio di Ponzò suggests a very powerful and mobile Genovese colony, which co-existed with Greeks, Romanians, Armenians, and Mongols.<sup>403</sup> The Genovese were allowed to have consuls in Kilia and Licostomo, and the consul office was sometimes performed by notaries. In Kilia, there is mention made to consuls Benjamin (pre-1360), Nicolaus Branchaleonus (1360), Barnaba di Carpina (1360–1361) and others, while Licostomo notes Petru Embrone (1382) and Nicolae de Fieschi (1403).<sup>404</sup> The consuls and a *curia* (*curie Ianuensis in Chili* or *curie consulatus Chili*) held the Genovese accountable for their actions and regulated various trade matters.<sup>405</sup> The trade wars between Dobrotitsa, prince of Dobruja, and the Genovese broke out in the latter half of the 14th century, affecting Kilia.<sup>406</sup> After 1370, the town fails to appear in sources, since the Genovese take refuge in Licostomo.<sup>407</sup> The 1387 treaty with Ivanko, Dobrotitsa's follower, provided the Genovese with guarantees for properties held in Ivanko's lands, as well as greater trade freedom.<sup>408</sup>

In the next century, Kilia went through various reigns. Even though Roman I was self-proclaimed ruler “to the sea” in 1392, Kilia was no part of his domain. It features in the Kiev list, but is not placed

<sup>400</sup> Iliescu, “Nouvelles contributions,” p. 240.

<sup>401</sup> Deletant, “Genoese,” p. 522; Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia,” p. 76.

<sup>402</sup> Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia,” pp. 69–78.

<sup>403</sup> Published by Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi* and Balard, *Gênes*, tom II.

<sup>404</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 88, doc. 43; pp. 90–93, doc. 45–47; Pistarino, *Notai*, p. 65, doc. 40; Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia,” pp. 65–79; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 52–53.

<sup>405</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, pp. 82–84, doc. 49–50; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 88, doc. 43. For how colonies by the Black Sea were organized, see Astuti, “Le colonie genovesi,” pp. 87–129.

<sup>406</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 163, doc. 100.

<sup>407</sup> Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, pp. 145, 147.

<sup>408</sup> Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 54; *Din istoria Dobrogei*, vol. III, pp. 346–361.

among “Vlach” strongholds and towns.<sup>409</sup> Give the future evolution of the town and the fortress here, we have reason to believe that Moldavia only came to conquer Kilia after three other decades. There is not internal source documenting this town until 1435 and no other source hints that the Moldavian ruler would have occupied the settlement at the end of the 14th century. The Wallachian rulers followed the Genovese as the town’s leaders, and they held this position at least from the latter half of Mircea the Old’s rule until the time of Dan II (after 1403–1404, until 1426).<sup>410</sup>

In 1420, when the Ottomans launched a massive attack on the Romanian Principalities, Kilia was temporarily conquered, as one letter by King Sigismund of Hungary points out.<sup>411</sup> Octavian Iliescu theorizes that Kilia had come under Wallachian rule in the early days of Mircea the Old’s rule, if not even sooner.<sup>412</sup> Wallachian rulers had domain over land south of Moldavia for several decades and we see no reason why they would have discarded Kilia. The agreements between Mircea the Old and Alexandru the Good probably confirmed the rule of the Wallachian prince over Kilia.<sup>413</sup> In the meantime, Hungary had also taken an interest in the town, since it sought a more solid economic and military position by the mouths of the Danube. In 1412, the treaty of Lublau, secretly concluded between Sigismund of Luxembourg and Władysław Jagiełło, king of Poland, included a provision which had Hungary receive Kilia in case Moldavia would not provide military aid against the Turks.<sup>414</sup> This provision was seen as an argument for Moldavia owning Kilia at that time.<sup>415</sup> We believe however that the Wallachian rulers still had Kilia in their grasp, and the Hungarian king consented to this, but only reserved the right to take it in case the Ottoman threat escalated. Mircea the Old was at that time actively involved in struggles over the throne in the Ottoman Empire,

<sup>409</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>410</sup> Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân*, pp. 361–362; Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldopolone,” pp. 98–100; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 221.

<sup>411</sup> F. Constantiniu, Ș. Papacostea, “Tratatul de la Lublau (15 martie 1412) și situația internațională a Moldovei la începutul veacului al XV-lea,” *SRDI*, vol. XVII, no. 5 (1964), p. 1139.

<sup>412</sup> Iliescu, “Localizarea,” p. 456.

<sup>413</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 46–48.

<sup>414</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 483, doc. CCCCI; Racoviță, “Începuturile suzeranității,” p. 323.

<sup>415</sup> Constantiniu, Papacostea, “Tratatul de la Lublau,” pp. 1138–1139; Ciocâltan, “Chilia,” pp. 2091–2095.

so Sigismund could plan to “seize” the fortress the ruler still held. In the Adriatic area, the king was in a conflict with Venice and probably wished to ensure that the mouths of the Danube were still under his influence.<sup>416</sup> On the other hand, the Polish king was entitled to take over Cetatea Albă.

Kilia returned to Moldavia later on, after 1426.<sup>417</sup> In 1429 and 1431, it was claimed by Hungary and Wallachia,<sup>418</sup> and we know it was part of Ștefan II’s domain in 1435, since it was mentioned both as a fortress, and as a customs point.<sup>419</sup> It was transferred to Hungary, and then returned to Wallachia, probably between 1439 and 1445/1446.<sup>420</sup> In February 1446, a *pârcălab* of the Moldavian prince is mentioned here indirectly.<sup>421</sup> Two years later, in 1448, it re-enters the control of John Hunyadi, voivode of Transylvania (1441–1456), then regent of Hungary, who had just instated Petru II on the Moldavian throne.<sup>422</sup> Petre P. Panaitescu opens up a different perspective. He believes that, all this time, the town was still part of Wallachia, which accepted one Hungarian garrison here.<sup>423</sup> His theory finds the support of other sources. In 1462, Constantine Mihailović from Ostrovica, accompanying Mehmed II in his attack on Wallachia, notes a claim by the sultan which serves as indirect evidence to Kilia’s dependence on Wallachia: “For as long as Kilia and Cetatea Albă are under Romanian rule, and the Hungarians have the Serbian Belgrade, we cannot ever prevail.”<sup>424</sup> An Ottoman document from 1517–1527 also indicates the period when the town and the land around it were first under Hungarian, then Wallachian rule. We do not believe the sultan was not aware of the realities of the area he attacked. Kilia belonged to Wallachia, and the sultan only ascribed Belgrade to Hungary.<sup>425</sup>

Ștefan the Great realized that Cetatea Albă was not enough for his ambitions to lead a powerful regional policy and that he had to control the Danube mouths as well. Mehmed II had occupied Constantinople

<sup>416</sup> Papacostea, “Kilia,” pp. 421–427.

<sup>417</sup> Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldo-polone,” pp. 99–102.

<sup>418</sup> Racoviță, “Începuturile suzeranității,” pp. 319, 325–326.

<sup>419</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>420</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 38–42.

<sup>421</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 371, doc. 262.

<sup>422</sup> *Cronicle slavo-române*, pp. 44, 48; Papacostea, “Kilia,” pp. 432–434.

<sup>423</sup> Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldo-polone,” pp. 106–107; DRH, D, I, p. 413, doc. 302; p. 418, doc. 305; p. 435, doc. 318.

<sup>424</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 128.

<sup>425</sup> *Documente turcești*, vol. I, p. 10, doc. 9.

in 1453 and sought to claim authority over the states around the Black Sea. The strategic position of Kilia garnered Ottoman attention as well, in case an attack on Moldavia ensued. Ștefan made unsuccessful attempts at conquering the fortress in 1462.<sup>426</sup> More noteworthy is the fact that Ștefan mounted his attack at once with an Ottoman invasion against Vlad the Impaler, another indication that Wallachia was related to Kilia.<sup>427</sup> Ștefan does not forfeit his plans and manages to conquer Kilia in 1465.<sup>428</sup>

After 1400, the urban core gradually moved to the north bank of the river, where there was already a new settlement by the ford.<sup>429</sup> It was here that Ștefan erected a new stronghold in 1479. 18th century outlines for Kilia note a stronghold and a suburb here, fortified according to the Constantinoplean pattern present in Cetatea Albă as well. The walls outlined a citadel, a garrison enclosure and a civilian perimeter. The surface of this compound was of 7.5 hectares, with the civilian grounds ranging up to 4 ha.<sup>430</sup> To build this fortified facility, Ștefan employed an impressive number of craftsmen: 800 masons and 17000 apprentices.<sup>431</sup>

Ștefan's stronghold, further north, as well as its nearby town, persisted under Ottoman rule. Instead, even though it did not succumb completely as a fortification, the ancient Kilia on the southern bank fell to ruin.<sup>432</sup> Licostomo followed in its tracks in the 15th century. Iorga identified a certain Petru Messopero de Ansaldo, who traded in Lviv in 1440 and called himself *haeres Licostomi* ("Licostomo' heir") and *consul Francorum*. The historian believes this title to have been make-believe, and not politically accurate, since Licostomo had lost its importance.<sup>433</sup> Licostomo had a fate similar to Kilia's, alternating between Wallachian and Moldavian control.<sup>434</sup> In 1484, when Kilia is conquered by the Ottomans, Licostomo was in ruins. The Ottomans rebuild its walls, in

<sup>426</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 440, doc. 323.

<sup>427</sup> Panaitescu, "Legăturile moldo-polone," pp. 109–111.

<sup>428</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

<sup>429</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 50–52.

<sup>430</sup> Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, pp. 197–201; see fig. 149–150.

<sup>431</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 34.

<sup>432</sup> Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, pp. 64–66.

<sup>433</sup> N. Iorga, "Lucruri noi despre Chilia și Cetatea Albă," *AARMSI*, 3rd series, vol. 5 (1926), pp. 325–326; Șerban Papacostea, "La fin de la domination génoise à Licostomo," *AIIAI*, vol. XXII, no. 1 (1985), p. 33.

<sup>434</sup> Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 52–56.

an attempt to secure a control post where the river joined the sea.<sup>435</sup> As the Danube Delta advanced further, this post was abandoned.

Even though few sources in these times of successive changes in Kilia's status have been kept, all those ruling here safeguarded the autonomy of the townspeople. The income provided by the two strongholds overlooking access to the main Danubian waterway was more important, as well as the customs duty. The townspeople had freedom to trade and elect their representatives. Moldavian chronicles hold information that shows special standing for the inhabitants under Ștefan the Great as well. After the 1465 siege, "voivode Ștefan entered the stronghold and dwelled there over the course of three days, greatly rejoicing and praising the Lord and reconciling those in the stronghold" (*Letopisețul Anonim*); "There resided Ștefan three days and then did those in the *târg* give full obedience" (*Cronica moldo-germană*).<sup>436</sup> The medieval language assigned special meaning to "reconciliation" and "obedience." The fragments refer to the acceptance of the new ruler by the townspeople, but also to the acknowledgement of rights for them. This compromise was also occasioned by some letters sent to the townspeople by the king of Poland, which enticed them into collaborating with Ștefan.<sup>437</sup> The inhabitants of Kilia have a similar situation to that of those in Cetatea Albă.

The Constance council was also attended by a group from Kilia (*Kylo*). Texts mentioning delegations arriving at this reunion place Kilia along with Cetatea Albă and Caffa, so we may assume that mostly the Genovese sent envoys.<sup>438</sup> The Genovese in Kilia, Caffa, and Pera were closely related to each other and these ties were definitely not only economic, but also spiritual.

Townspeople of other origins feature as *habitor Chili*, not only the Italians. Sarchis the Armenian (*Erminio*) is an important tradesman, mentioned in 1360 and 1361 while trading wax and honey with merchants in Pera and Caffa.<sup>439</sup> Documents mention Greeks as well, such as Teodorus Lambarda the butcher, Venetians, like Iohann de Clarenzia and Petro de Ognibem, who are noted as *ensarii*, but Hungarians as

<sup>435</sup> Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 85; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 53.

<sup>436</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 7, 16; 29.

<sup>437</sup> Panaitescu, "Legăturile moldo-polone," pp. 111–112.

<sup>438</sup> Karadja, "Delegații," p. 82.

<sup>439</sup> Pistarino. *Notai Genovesi*, p. 30, doc. 19; p. 57, doc. 35.

well, like Yagop *de Ungaria*.<sup>440</sup> There were two Catholic churches, with St Francis and St Dominic as their patrons, as well as a Greek church (St John).<sup>441</sup> There was a central marketplace, stores, dwellings, mills. Many inhabitants exported cereals, wax, honey or slaves, but were also usurers.<sup>442</sup> Some names of bankers have been preserved: Francesco and Laurencio Bustarino, Giorgio de Chaveghia di Voltri and Luchino de Bennama.<sup>443</sup> It was claimed that the town had even received the right to mint its own coins, more specifically, silver asprons (*asperi centum de Chili*), probably an imitation of Mongolian asprons, featured in a 1361 transaction.<sup>444</sup> The same documents note the phrase *ad pondus Chili*, showing a local standard of measurement to have existed.<sup>445</sup> *Licostomo asprons* have been identified as well.<sup>446</sup> Later on, when Kilia entered Hungarian domain, Hungarians come into town. A 1484 document regulating fishing in the area has 20 fisherman names, with seven of them belonging to Hungarians.<sup>447</sup> Historical sources are not as generous on the period when the town was under Moldavian rule (or Wallachian), a period we know little about. The customs house mentioned here probably brought significant income to the ruler.<sup>448</sup>

Kilia was conquered by Ottomans in July 1484, because of the treason of one of the town leaders.<sup>449</sup> As in Cetatea Albă, the inhabitants of Kilia held a certain autonomy, both fiscal and legal.<sup>450</sup> The first period of Ottoman rule saw smaller customs duties for the townspeople, and trade was stimulated.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>440</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 22, doc. 15; p. 62, doc. 38; p. 103, doc. 61; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 193, doc. 122.

<sup>441</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 51, doc. 31; Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, p. 146. În 1453, we will find that the construction of a Franciscan monastery with St Bernard as its patron was planned (DRH, D, I, p. 433, doc. 317).

<sup>442</sup> Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, pp. 149–150.

<sup>443</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 3, doc. 1; p. 50, doc. 31; p. 47, doc. 29; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, pp. 148–153, doc. 87–92; pp. 156–158, doc. 94–97.

<sup>444</sup> Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 175, doc. 97.

<sup>445</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 132, doc. 77; p. 140, doc. 81.

<sup>446</sup> Iliescu, “La monnaie génoise,” pp. 164, 166.

<sup>447</sup> Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane*, p. 167, doc. XI.

<sup>448</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>449</sup> *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 10, 19; *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 76–78, 130–132, 325–327; Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” p. 68.

<sup>450</sup> Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 71, 80.

<sup>451</sup> Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane*, p. 163, doc. X.



*Lăpușna*

Town density in the land between the Prut and the Dniester was low. Mongol attacks were an ever-looming threat, so towns developed here only later and were not as thriving as their counterparts in the northwest.<sup>452</sup> Lăpușna is located on the river by the same name, in a thickly wooded area. The town developed out of an older settlement, located on the road linking Iași, the Dniester, and Cetatea Albă. Its area was turned into a county, with Lăpușna as its seat. It is first mentioned as a customs point. Since the ruler set up most customs points in pre-urban or urban settlements, we may infer that, in 1454, when the customs point here is certified, the town already existed or was on its way to graduate to the urban stage.<sup>453</sup> The gradually increasing importance of the settlement is also supported by the inclusion of the customs tax in acknowledgements of the privilege granted to Polish merchants in 1456 and 1460 (it does not feature in 1408).<sup>454</sup>

The town appears to have been well-developed in the 16th century, its name being tied to one of the Moldavian rulers, Alexandru Lăpușneanu, whose mother was a native of the place.<sup>455</sup> It was in this century that the craftsmen and priests in town are mentioned, as well as the *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*.<sup>456</sup> Nothing is known of the ethnic make-up of the settlement in the two centuries. The Romanians were most likely predominant, since the Saxons and Hungarians avoided settling here (except the ones in Orhei and Cioburciu). Missionaries mention no Catholic church in this town.

*Milcovia and Putna*

The southern Moldavian area was more prone to turmoil, being claimed both by Hungary, and Moldavia and Wallachia. Several local

<sup>452</sup> Ureche, *Letopiseșul*, p. 132.

<sup>453</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41; p. 243, doc. 164.

<sup>454</sup> Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești*, vol. II, p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>455</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 147; Pungă, *Țara Moldovei*, pp. 50, 74.

<sup>456</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 24, doc. 30; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. XXIII, pp. 348–349, doc. 166–168; Aurel V. Sava, *Documente privitoare la târgul și ținutul Lăpușnei* (Bucharest, 1937), p. 24, doc. 15.

*târgs* and towns emerged here: Milcovia, Putna, Olteni, Tecuci; only the last one survived through the Middle Ages.

In 1227, the bishopric of Cumania was created here, with a residence placed by sources in a town on the river Milcov (*civitas de Mylko*), destroyed by the Mongol invasion in 1241.<sup>457</sup> It is believed that main see of the bishopric was also located here after 1347 as well (the date the bishopric was recreated).<sup>458</sup> We cannot tell whether the bishops appointed by the pope for the Milcovia see ever came to claim their diocese, but we have data on the existence of certain local clergy structures (priests, churches).<sup>459</sup> Nicolae Iorga placed this settlement around the present town of Odobești.<sup>460</sup> Giurescu initially believed it to be near Reghiu, on the Milcov valley, but he later revisited his statement, claiming himself it was in Odobești.<sup>461</sup> A more recent interpretation assigns Milcovia to one of the settlements neighbouring Odobești, in Focșani or Vârteșcoiu, where traces of a 13th century fortalice have been discovered.<sup>462</sup> The only certainty is that it was on the Milcov river. Sources would not have named the bishop's see Milcovia had it not been located on this waterway. Further upstream, there were no conditions to allow a fortress or a town to be created, since the valley narrows down. What's more, this was more of a road to nowhere, since the valley of Milcov was accompanied only by a medieval local road, which entered the Vrancea depression. Odobești's region is continued by a plain with no high point, so a fortress would not have been the best choice here: its lack of natural defences would have almost invited attacks. The Odobești area then remains the best solution to pinpoint the old Milcovia, since this is the most favourable position, where the river of Milcov entered the high ground. Giurescu also brought another indirect argument to this location: viticulture, which supposedly drew representatives of the Catholic Church. We have already shown that Germans brought new methods of growing wine into Central and Eastern Europe. From Transylvania, they crossed the mountains, and

<sup>457</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 29, doc. 12.

<sup>458</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 45, doc. 22; p. 63, doc. 34.

<sup>459</sup> DH, vol. II, part 2, p. 174, doc. 133; pp. 279–280, doc. 250–251; Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, pp. 80–84, doc. 79–84; Auner, *Episcopia Milcoviei*, pp. 68–70; Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova*, pp. 32–38, 44–50.

<sup>460</sup> Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. III, pp. 175–176.

<sup>461</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol. I, p. 319; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 41–42; C. C. Giurescu, *Istoricul podgoriei Odobeștilor* (Bucharest, 1969), pp. 36–37.

<sup>462</sup> Paragină, *Habitatul medieval*, pp. 36–39, 85–87; Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 462–463.

we have already found them in Cotnari and Huși, where they specialized in producing and selling wine. The Odobești area was populated by a large vineyard, whose early days may be associated with the arrival of settlers near old Catholic establishments.<sup>463</sup>

In the latter half of the 14th century (probably in 1375), the land of the Milcovia bishopric was attached to Wallachia after being under Hungarian control. From this year on, no bishops holding tenure of this diocese are noted over several decades.<sup>464</sup> Moldavia retakes this land in c. 1417–1423. The first document whereby Alexandru the Good confirms ownership of a village in this part (on the river Putna) is dated March 1423.<sup>465</sup> This period also contains the first mention of nearby Vrancea.<sup>466</sup> The final regulation of the boundary with Wallachia was the product of Ștefan the Great's warfare, who took the fortress at Crăciuna in 1482 and set a final border on the rivers of Siret and Milcov.<sup>467</sup>

The *târg* in Putna, on the river valley by the same name, thus came under Moldavian control and became a town. Given its location on a trade route, Putna becomes a customs point and is noted as such in a privilege acknowledgement by Ștefan the Great in 1460.<sup>468</sup> Despite Giurescu's claims that the town disappeared following battles between the principalities in the latter half of the 15th century, Putna existed until mid 16th century.<sup>469</sup> In 1503, Brașov was visited by many merchants, natives of Putna. Their merchandise (14660 asprons) was worth more than that of other towns in the area, such as Bacău (1500 asprons) or Tecuci (1200 asprons), verging on that of merchandise brought by those from Troțuș (around 19000 asprons).<sup>470</sup> The customs tax records of 1529–1530 and 1542 no longer feature Putna, although they note it in 1543 and 1545–1547. 1548 sees a sudden decrease of the trade volume here (only 400 asprons), and this also goes for 1549–1550. From 1551, the town is no longer noted in Brașov's records.<sup>471</sup> In

<sup>463</sup> Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor*, p. 266; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 156.

<sup>464</sup> Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova*, p. 46; Papacostea, "Triumful luptei," pp. 51–52; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 128–132.

<sup>465</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 77, doc. 53.

<sup>466</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 282, doc. 181.

<sup>467</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 19; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 101, 106; Papacostea, *Geneza statului*, pp. 111–115; Iosipescu, "Vrancea, Putna," pp. 205–220.

<sup>468</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>469</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 311.

<sup>470</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 261–262.

<sup>471</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 271–304.

1555, the last Putna customs officer is mentioned, and 1559 and 1570 documents contain mentions to the settlement as a former town.<sup>472</sup> Anton Paragină believes that a village, Grigoreşti, was quick to rise where the town once stood.<sup>473</sup>

It is likely that a 1547–1548 event was a decisive turn in the town's fate. The Putna area is in one of the areas with the highest seismic risk in Europe, so a earthquake may have been its undoing. Strong earthquakes are recorded in 1545 and 1550 beyond the mountains, in south-east Transylvania.<sup>474</sup> In 1548, the chronicle of Macarie tells of a very harsh winter, which dried out the trees and vineyards, the mainstay of livelihood for the locals.<sup>475</sup> A natural disaster probably dealt one final blow to the town.<sup>476</sup> 1546 sees the first mention of the town that would replace Putna in the area: Focşani, still a village at that point.<sup>477</sup>

### *Neamţ*

The emergence of Neamţ is lost in time. The town developed as a suburb near a stronghold.<sup>478</sup> Excavations inside this stronghold reveal it to have been erected under Petru I, only to be rebuilt and extended during Ştefan the Great's reign.<sup>479</sup> Controversy also underscores the town's name. When referring to Germans, the Romanians adopted the Slavonic *neamţ* (Old Slav. *nemec*, *nemets*).<sup>480</sup> Despite all this, most medieval documents refer to Germans coming to Moldavia as *săşi*, as they did in Transylvania and Wallachia. The name of the town of Neamţ has a singular form which illustrates an individual presence, that of a

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<sup>472</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. VII, p. 285; DIR, XVI, A, II, p. 71, doc. 67; p. 223, doc. 236.

<sup>473</sup> Paragină, *Habitatul medieval*, pp. 41–42.

<sup>474</sup> Paul Cernovodeanu, Paul Binder, *Cavalerii Apocalipsului. Calamitățile naturale din trecutul României (până la 1800)* (Bucharest, 1993), pp. 208–212, 229.

<sup>475</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 89, 104; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 156.

<sup>476</sup> The plague in 1553–1554 dealt a heavy blow to Braşov, which lost almost half its population (Cernovodeanu, Binder, *Cavalerii Apocalipsului*, p. 51).

<sup>477</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, p. 279.

<sup>478</sup> Grigoraş, “Despre oraşul,” p. 93.

<sup>479</sup> The stronghold is noted in the Kiev list (*Novgorodskaiia pervaia letopisi*, p. 475); N. Constantinescu, “Date noi în legătură cu Cetatea Neamţului,” *SCIV*, vol. XI, no. 1 (1960), pp. 81–105; N. Constantinescu, “Din nou în problema Cetăţii Neamţului,” *SCIV*, vol. XIV, no. 1 (1963), pp. 217–223.

<sup>480</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 99, 125.

person who stood out by their actions. We cannot rule out that a German master mason had arrived from Northern Europe to conduct the construction work for the stronghold. The construction type falls into a pattern used at that time in Poland, and architects have identified some wall fragments which would support the theory that specialists from the Polish-Baltic areas participated in the works.<sup>481</sup> In 1395, when King Sigismund of Luxemburg arrives here with the purpose of overthrowing Ștefan I, the name was already well-known: the king issues a document *ante castrum Nempch*.<sup>482</sup>

The place where the town stood was initially that of an older local settlement. This is supported by the fact that it was positioned where the river Ozana made its way out the mountains, and by Petru I's choice of this area for erecting a stronghold. Traces of this settlement have yet to be investigated, since archaeological excavations focused on the stronghold area, circumventing the medieval town, which has few remains to offer to the modern historian. A county by the same name of Neamț had its residence here. It was originally created after 1350, by merging at least two territorial structures, one from the Ozana valley, and other, from the Bistrița valley. This explains why two towns (Neamț and Piatra lui Crăciun) on distinct river valleys existed in the same county. Neamț was the better positioned of the two, initially developing as a local *târg*, where three roads crossed, the ones leading to Baia, Piatra, and Iași. Once the stronghold was built, a group of Saxons was colonized and received a privilege. The town seal had a Latin legend: S(IGILLUM) CIVIVM DE NIMCZ (“The seal of the townspeople of Neamț”).<sup>483</sup> The presence of this *civium* is an indication that, when the privilege was granted, the town community only consisted of Saxons, and the locals only joined them later. German names also prevail ever since the first few texts documenting the town.<sup>484</sup> This theory is confirmed by the *mistici*, a term used in a princely document which refers to the townspeople (1455). Most purchase or sales documents mention the townspeople individually, but the above-mentioned text addresses them collectively, as with the Saxons in Baia. Alexandru II steps in to cancel the attempts by townspeople in Neamț of selling a part of the town domain. This was highly unusual, since the domain

<sup>481</sup> Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, pp. 112, 114–118; Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*, pp. 469–472.

<sup>482</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 130, doc. 82.

<sup>483</sup> Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” p. 35.

<sup>484</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 342, doc. 241; II, p. 21, doc. 19.

was property of the ruler and inhabitants only had right of use over it. The townspeople knew they had no full ownership of the domain, like they did over town parcels. Their unusual actions must have had solid grounds. It is likely that the privilege of the Neamț Saxons included extended rights over the domain, rights that the central authority later cancelled. To avoid a legal dispute, Alexandru threatened the townspeople with payment of a large amount of money if they went to trial.<sup>485</sup> The term *miasto* refers to Neamț in 1503 as well, when Ștefan the Great decides to donate part of the Neamț camena to the monastery of Neamț.<sup>486</sup> The recurrence of *miasto* / *mistići* for the town and the community shows a privileged, separate group existed here, enjoying a different status. After 1600, Marco Bandini confirms this by extracting information from local tradition. He noted the town as having been inhabited by Saxons alone, who: “great power came with their reputation, as well as their money.”<sup>487</sup> A delegation from this town could not have been absent in the Constance council.<sup>488</sup> In 1448, Saxon Peter *gewantscherer* from Neamț features as a citizen of Kraków.<sup>489</sup> The town had won its fame outside Moldavia, since even Nicolaus Cusanus (1401–1464) had heard of it. Under the name *Nemecz*, Cusanus includes it in his map of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>490</sup>

The Germans were a substantial community until the 1600s.<sup>491</sup> A measure of their numbers and influence is the fact that they erected at least two Catholic churches in town: the Church of the Holy Trinity and that of the Holy Virgin.<sup>492</sup> Romanians probably joined the town community in the 15th century, and steadily multiplied in the next centuries to become the majority. A *șoltuz* with a Romanian name already exists in 1599, and several decades later, we will find that the town had at least two Orthodox churches, one of them being founded by the

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<sup>485</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 62, doc. 45.

<sup>486</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 520, doc. 293.

<sup>487</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 324; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 202.

<sup>488</sup> Karadja, “Delegații,” pp. 69, 82–83.

<sup>489</sup> Weczerka, “Die stellung,” p. 237.

<sup>490</sup> Popescu-Spineni, *România în istoria*, vol. I, pp. 92–96; vol. II, map 35.

<sup>491</sup> Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. VII, pp. 374–376; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 38; vol. V, p. 241.

<sup>492</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. IV, pp. 38–39; vol. V, pp. 183–184, 241–242.

ruler (St Demetrius).<sup>493</sup> A group of Mongols (*tătarii domnești*) also inhabited the outskirts, and saw to the needs of the fortress dwellers.<sup>494</sup>

The emblem in the town seal (a grapevine) is a symbol of the main pursuit here, producing and selling wine.<sup>495</sup> A 1437 document even mentions the place “where the Saxon vineyards once were,” while another, in 1433, mentions Andrica’s vineyard and its winepress.<sup>496</sup> After 1500, this business is no longer mentioned, and the town enters a slow decline.<sup>497</sup> Even though many merchants from neighbouring Baia, Suceava and Roman are mentioned in the Brașov market, only few are from Neamț.<sup>498</sup> The town was afflicted by the various wars in Moldavia. It was torched once the Hungarian king launched an attack here in 1467 and probably in 1476, when Mehmed II’s armies took the nearby stronghold by siege.<sup>499</sup>

### *Orhei*

Orhei, on the river Răut, had two towns: one was a staple of Mongol times, and another was the result of the area coming under Moldavian rule. From the 16th century on, the latter town switched its core and moved to another area. Archaeologists have yet to agree over the date the former stronghold (Orheiul Vechi) was founded. Some believe that an earthen fortification was erected before the Mongol conquest, but this is not shared by all scholars. Other historians support a second theory, according to which the earthen stronghold, as well as the stone citadel which completed it, was first built in the 14th century by the Mongols. Accurate dates lacking, it is hard to establish a precise timeline.<sup>500</sup> Mongols probably did not create a fortified location by accident, since this seems to have been the most important

<sup>493</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 246, doc. 304; Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” p. 35; Iorga, *Studii și documente*, vol. VII, pp. 374–375; *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 242, 325.

<sup>494</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 237, doc. 169; p. 367, doc. 259; II, p. 187, doc. 132.

<sup>495</sup> Gorovei, “Am pus pecetea,” pp. 35–36.

<sup>496</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 237, doc. 169; p. 342, doc. 241.

<sup>497</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 241.

<sup>498</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 259–279.

<sup>499</sup> Gonța, “Strategia lui Ștefan,” p. 1133.

<sup>500</sup> A short history of research and bibliography, including the one in Russian, in Pavel Bârnea, Tatiana Reaboi, “Orheiul Vechi (istorical cercetărilor),” *HU*, vol. VII, no. 1–2 (1999), pp. 17–25; see also Gheorghe Postică, “Cetatea Orheiul Vechi în lumina cercetărilor arheologice din anii 1996–2000,” *AM*, vol. 26 (2003), pp. 101–106.

land between the Prut and the Dniester. A study of coins minted here shows that the name of the settlement in those times was *Şehr al-Djedid* or *Ianghi-Şehr*, meaning New Town.<sup>501</sup> Excavations undertaken revealed various public service buildings, a mosque, stone dwellings, and Eastern-type bathrooms. Discoveries also include two round yurts, Eastern ceramics and craftwork, hinting at the existence of Eastern communities, accustomed to semi-nomadic living.<sup>502</sup> Some works were carried out in the stone citadel immediately after this settlement was overrun and destroyed by the armies of one of the first rulers of Moldavia (c. 1367–1368). Evidence to this is a former Muslim “monastery” (*hanaka*) in the old town which, after the destruction brought about by the conquest, was adapted and became since early 15th century a seat for the *pârcălab* that the ruler set up here.<sup>503</sup>

The town name is Hungarian in origin, derived from *várhelly* (“place of the stronghold”).<sup>504</sup> It was probably assigned by a group of Hungarian colonists who set up camp near the stronghold in Orheiul Vechi, after the town became part of Moldavia. The Moldavian attendants of the 1415 Constance council supposedly included some from *Ierhe* as well, a settlement identified by Constantin I. Karadja with Orhei.<sup>505</sup> The grey ceramics, atypical of the area, was also found in this town, supporting the presence of a colonist group here.<sup>506</sup> Unfortunately written sources are reluctant to providing any data on the inhabitants. The only one mentioned in the sources of the time is the *pârcălab* that the ruler appointed in the fortress.<sup>507</sup> This area was by no means a safe one, give the attacks of the Crimean Mongols. Destruction owed to the invasions of 1499, 1513, 1518 and 1538 led to the old town place being abandoned towards 1550 and moved 18 km upstream the Răut river. In 1574, when the old settlement features as Orheiul Vechi, the move had already occurred.<sup>508</sup> The inhabitants enjoyed the same privilege they had in the old town. They were entitled to elect their own *şoltuz*, noted in documents in 1580.<sup>509</sup>

<sup>501</sup> Spinei, “Comerţul,” pp. 210–211; Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>502</sup> Spinei, “Comerţul,” pp. 203–214.

<sup>503</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 380; Şlapac, *Cetăţi medievale*, pp. 153–164.

<sup>504</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 310.

<sup>505</sup> Karadja, “Delegaţii,” pp. 70, 82–83.

<sup>506</sup> Batariuc, “Din nou despre ceramica,” p. 231.

<sup>507</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 241, doc. 163; p. 320, doc. 212.

<sup>508</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 36, doc. 45.

<sup>509</sup> Iorga, *Studii şi documente*, vol. V, p. 74.



*Piatra lui Crăciun*

The town of Piatra emerged on the Bistrița river valley, and medieval sources also call it Piatra lui Crăciun.<sup>510</sup> Since the entire valley of the Bistrița could be controlled from here, both up and downstream, a settlement and a fortalice emerged here at least two centuries before the town was created. The other bank of the river held traces of a stone fortification overlapping a Dacian stronghold and reinforced by an earth mound with palisade, as well as three other moats (the fortalice by Bâta Doamnei). Archaeological research shows that the settlement was not strictly military in purpose, since weapons were not the only findings, but were completed by a church, semi-sunken dwellings, ceramics, tools, jewellery, but also a coin from Bela III of Hungary (1172–1196). The compound in Bâta Doamnei was dated to the latter half of the 12th and early 13th century. It was originally claimed that it could have been the temporary residence of a local knez.<sup>511</sup> A more likely explanation is that the king of Hungary erected a fortified centre to protect Transylvania from potential foreign attacks, which could make inroads into the kingdom via the Bistrița valley. It was destroyed by the Mongols in 1241.<sup>512</sup>

After the fortalice in Bâta Doamnei fell into disuse, the main habitation core moved on the other bank of the Bistrița, where the future town is to emerge.<sup>513</sup> A certain Crăciun took residence here in the 14th century, and held domain over both the settlement and the entire Bistrița valley. This figure probably wielded much power in the area, and since his name is Hungarian in origin, he was probably a representative of the Hungarian king. In the final years of the 14th century, his fortification in Piatra was significant enough to be considered a *grad* by the Kiev list. The author of the list knew its position and the name of its former lord: “up into the mountains—Piatra lui Crăciun.”<sup>514</sup> An eye witness provides an even more competent testimony. He was the one drafting a document for King Sigismund of Hungary, who visited the area in 1395. The document written *ante villam Karachonkw* reveals

<sup>510</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 45, doc. 33; p. 151, doc. 107; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 99.

<sup>511</sup> Constantin Scorpan, “L’ensemble archéologique féodal de Bâta Doamnei,” *Dacia. Revue d’archéologie et d’Histoire ancienne*, new series, vol. IX (1965), pp. 441–454.

<sup>512</sup> Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 112–113, 199.

<sup>513</sup> Eugenia Neamțu, “Date istorice și arheologice cu privire la curtea domnească din Piatra Neamț,” *Memoria Antiquitatis* (Piatra Neamț) vol. I (1969), pp. 229–230.

<sup>514</sup> *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

that the settlement would not have looked much like a town in the eyes of a Westerner.<sup>515</sup> Towns in the Romanian Principalities had, until later times, houses made chiefly out of wood, so their aspect did not resemble that of towns in Central and Western Europe, where stone had prevailed as a construction material after the Great Plague. Its mention as a *villa* can however be an argument for the settlement not having yet reached its final urban stage.

A 1431 document cites the transfer by Alexandru the Good of Crăciun's house in Piatra (*doma* in the Old Slavonic original, probably a fortified tower) to the monastery of Bistrița. We can therefore assume that, at some point prior to 1431, Crăciun's domains, including the settlement in Piatra, had come under Moldavian rule by force or by the bloodline dying out. We are unaware of the reasons the ruler erected a new residence in Piatra, nor why he didn't keep the older fortification of Crăciun. The name of the prince who built the new one is unknown. It certainly existed long before 1491, when it is first mentioned.<sup>516</sup> The coins from Petru I and Alexandru the Good suggest this.<sup>517</sup> As with some many other cases in the Romanian Principalities, only the church of St John the Baptist, rebuilt by Ștefan the Great in 1497–1498, and several ruins survived here. The walls discovered in the last century were relatively thick, at 1.40 m, and point to the initially defensive purpose of the residence.<sup>518</sup> The fact no less than 26 villages were left to cater to this residence shows that the ruler saw it as one of the most important in the country.<sup>519</sup> As in Iași, the church of St John the Baptist was erected separately from the main enclosure, and had its own yard and walls.<sup>520</sup> The rulers also saw to the monastery of Bistrița, founded by Alexandru the Good, named on several occasions “from Piatra,” since it was 10 km away. The many possessions the monastery would get in and around town would hinder the development of Piatra.<sup>521</sup> This is why the domain granted to town inhabitants was small. It was not a major town, and this is also shown by Neamț being chosen as a residence of the county by the same

<sup>515</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 130, doc. 81.

<sup>516</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 185, doc. 93.

<sup>517</sup> Constantin Matasă, “Șantierul arheologic Piatra Neamț,” *SCIV*, vol. VI, no. 3–4 (1955), pp. 836–837.

<sup>518</sup> Matasă, “Șantierul arheologic Piatra,” pp. 820–821; Nicolescu, *Arta*, pp. 327–328.

<sup>519</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 268–271.

<sup>520</sup> Neamțu, “Date istorice,” p. 232.

<sup>521</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 94, doc. 65; p. 151, doc. 107.

name, that Piatra was part of. The secondary rank of the town is also betrayed by the fact that no customs house is mentioned here.

Preserved documents relate little on the dawn of the town and its community. The medieval town sprawled towards the ruler's residence (north-west), the creek of Cuiejd (east) and the river Bistrița (south).<sup>522</sup> This is where two parallel streets can be noted, but the scarcity of sources and the cursory archaeological research carried out in town do not allow us to point whether a *locatio* existed or not. Gray ceramics, specific to a group of settlers, was also found.<sup>523</sup> In the 17th century, Marco Bandini, familiar with Catholic communities, recorded a local tradition whereby the town had only been inhabited by Hungarians in early days. There was a Catholic church here, but it did not survive.<sup>524</sup> The town's decline begins after 1550, when the Catholics recede greatly in numbers, leaving room for the Romanians. The Catholics were chased away by the Anti-Protestant policies of some of the Moldavian rulers. In 1551, a Szekler spy coming from Transylvania was informed by a Hungarian inhabitant from Piatra lui Crăciun of the tense climate in Moldavia. The ruler of the time, Ștefan Rareș, planned the forced baptism "under Romanian creed" of the Hungarians in the country.<sup>525</sup> In 1589, the town still had one group of Catholics. In that year, Petru the Lame commanded the Hungarians and Saxons in Piatra and Roman to receive the Jesuits in good faith.<sup>526</sup> Romanians begin to be the majority in the town, but not in any impressive numbers. No other Orthodox church has been documented, save for that of the ruler.<sup>527</sup> There is no Armenian community in Piatra lui Crăciun, instead, a Mongol village existed near the town, towards the east.<sup>528</sup>

The town *șoltuz* is mentioned barely in the 16th century.<sup>529</sup> Ion Neculce recorded one of the few conflicts between a ruler and townspeople to be noted in the Middle Ages. In one sketchy note, Neculce claims Petru Rareș was at one point chased by the inhabitants of Piatra, and

<sup>522</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 151, doc. 107.

<sup>523</sup> Matasă, "Șantierul arheologic Piatra," pp. 832–834.

<sup>524</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 188–190; *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, pp. 26, 184.

<sup>525</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 99.

<sup>526</sup> DH, vol. XI, p. LXV.

<sup>527</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 184.

<sup>528</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 151, doc. 107; p. 305, doc. 202.

<sup>529</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 136, doc. 178.

that he took revenge on them during his second reign (1541–1546).<sup>530</sup> This probably happened when Petru left the country during his first reign (1527–1538).

### *Roman*

The town of Roman is certified ever since the reign of the one lending it his name, Roman I. In 1392, he would issue a document in “this fortress of mine, voivode Roman,” the reference indicating the stronghold (*gorod*) near the town.<sup>531</sup> In the same period, the Kiev list includes among Moldavia fortresses and towns “Târgul lui Roman” (the *târg* of Roman).<sup>532</sup> We will not resume our discussion of the town’s emergence.<sup>533</sup> Chronicles, the seal, the ceramics uncovered and the town outline support the theory that Roman I founded it by a *locatio civitas*. Ureche’s Chronicle relates that “[Roman I] built the *târg* called Roman, as his writ testifies, which lies in the monastery at Pobrata.”<sup>534</sup> The legend of the seal is in Latin and mentions the *cives*, the medieval town outline was regular, and the grey ceramics clearly shows a group of settlers to have established here, probably coming from Poland.<sup>535</sup>

Since it was compared to Baia, which stood on the Moldova river valley as well, but further upstream, Roman is also mentioned as “Târgul de Jos” (The Lower *târg*) in internal documents.<sup>536</sup> Both towns were part of the Upper Country, the oldest land in Moldavia.<sup>537</sup> Roman I must have preferred this place for some reason. Perhaps he had created a seat here, in the earth and wood fortalice uncovered on the hill that towers over Moldova river, or perhaps this was the starting point for southbound expansion forays, while his brother, Petru I, was prince. The co-existence of two fortresses in Roman baffled archaeologists, who did not clarify the relation between the fortifications and

<sup>530</sup> Neculce, *O samă*, p. 170.

<sup>531</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.

<sup>532</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>533</sup> See the chapter on the emergence of towns in Moldavia.

<sup>534</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, p. 66.

<sup>535</sup> Vîrtosu, “Din sigilografia,” pp. 475–476; Chițescu, “Ceramica ștampilată,” pp. 418–420.

<sup>536</sup> Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești*, vol. II, p. 637, doc. 177; DRH, A, I, p. 55, doc. 39; p. 62, doc. 43.

<sup>537</sup> Costin, *Cronica polonă*, p. 216.

the town. The ones performing the excavations focused on the first fortress, while the second was believed to be a fortified town (with a moat, palisade, and towers), an assumption that seems unreliable when considering post-1350 Moldavia. Only the large towns of the country, Suceava, Baia, and Iași were surrounded by palisaded moats, and they enclosed a much larger perimeter than the one suggested in Roman. Excavations have ceased and detailed results of excavations in the second fortress have not been published; this affected interpretations of the town's emergence. By combining the data we now have, we can draw up the following theory of urban evolution in this particular instance:

1. a wood fortalice with an earth mound was erected by Petru I or Roman I with the purpose of consolidating the ruler's control over the area;<sup>538</sup>
2. after fulfilling its purpose, this fortalice is dismantled, and Roman I erects a new one, made of wood as well, but much larger, solely aimed at housing a princely residence;<sup>539</sup>
3. the town outlines make a positive case for Roman bringing colonists near, and not within this new fortification (as archaeologists claim), and granting them a privilege.<sup>540</sup>

The townspeople had no business coming into the fortification, since the centre of power, controlled by the ruler, was separated from the economic one, inhabited by the townspeople. It is hard to believe that the ruler shared an enclosure with the masses, especially since they enjoyed autonomy, as some evidence seems to suggest. In early 15th century, the settlement in Roman takes the final step to the town status.

The medieval town extended north—north-west of the ruler's residence. The two areas communicated via a central marketplace, where four parallel streets originated.<sup>541</sup> Whereas the area reserved for the ruler was populated by specific buildings (a palace, a church, outbuildings), the urban area was divided up into neighbourhoods, the main

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<sup>538</sup> M. D. Matei, "Câteva probleme de cronologie ridicate de cercetările din cetatea de pământ de la Roman," *SCIV*, vol. XV, no. 4 (1964), pp. 505–513.

<sup>539</sup> Matei, Chițescu, "Problèmes historiques," pp. 293–298, 315–316.

<sup>540</sup> Matei, Chițescu, "Problèmes historiques," pp. 295–296.

<sup>541</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 139.

streets being densely parcelled out.<sup>542</sup> In 1467, the town was besieged and torched by Matthias Corvinus, and this is also when wood reinforcements and earth mounds are mentioned, which were supposedly *ad oppidum Romanvasiar castra locavit*.<sup>543</sup> The many wars that would break out later on in Moldavia also ravaged the town on many occasions. Today, except for the general street network, not too many traces remain.<sup>544</sup>

The townspeople enjoyed autonomy based on a (now lost) privilege granted by Roman I.<sup>545</sup> This status seems to have initially encompassed more than in other towns, witness the lack of a ruler's judge here.<sup>546</sup> It is also likely that some inhabitants of Roman had attended the debates in Constance (1415). A settlement by the names of *Reinsmarkt* or *Roms-mark* is noted among Moldavian towns sending delegates and has been identified as Roman.<sup>547</sup> Along with Hungarians, the town was also inhabited by Saxons, Romanians, and Armenians. All these groups, Armenians notwithstanding, are specifically referred to in a document passed by Demeter *judex* and the townspeople of Roman in 1588.<sup>548</sup> The Armenian presence is confirmed by other sources. They took over the eastern side of town, where they created a vast neighbourhood with their own church, torn down during the 1551 banishment (later rebuilt).<sup>549</sup> There were at least two Catholic churches.<sup>550</sup> Bartolomeo Bassetti and Marco Bandini tell us that each ethnic group had its own church: there was a Saxon church, and a Hungarian one.<sup>551</sup> Neither survived the Middle Ages. An old church close to the ruler's residence became a bishop's church. Except for it, sources mention no other Orthodox church prior to 1569.<sup>552</sup>

<sup>542</sup> Greceanu, "La structure urbaine," pp. 41–53.

<sup>543</sup> Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum*, tom IV, p. 16.

<sup>544</sup> Matei, *Studii de istorie*, p. 59.

<sup>545</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 66. DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70.

<sup>546</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 119, doc. 84.

<sup>547</sup> Karadja, "Delegații," pp. 70, 82–83.

<sup>548</sup> *Moldvai*, p. 82, doc. 10.

<sup>549</sup> Goilav, "Armenii," p. 245; Buiuciu, *Cânt de jălire*, pp. 39–41; *Din tezaurul*, p. 68, doc. 94; *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 185, 244.

<sup>550</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, p. 6.

<sup>551</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 185; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 194; Melchisedec, *Chronica Romanului și a episcopiei de Roman*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1874), pp. 18–19.

<sup>552</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, pp. 720–725.

Near Roman, on the Siret bank, Ștefan the Great erected another fortress (Cetatea Nouă, 1466).<sup>553</sup> The new fortress was initially made of wood, and was rebuilt out of stone in 1483.<sup>554</sup> It was not built by accident, since this area had seen much bloodshed in the 15th century, and it had a strategic value. Whoever conquered Roman and crossed the rivers of Moldova or Siret could easily make headway towards the capital in Suceava. On several occasions, Roman is also featured as the place where the country's armies gathered.<sup>555</sup>

Roman was a county residence and a powerful economic centre. The customs is mentioned ever since 1408, as well as the livestock market near town.<sup>556</sup> One part of the inhabitants were engaged in trade in Brașov. In 1503, the records of this town noted 13 merchants who had brought 20 shipments of goods. Their value ranged well over 70000 asprons and placed Roman third in the list of Moldavian towns engaged in cross-mountain trade (after Suceava and Baia).<sup>557</sup> Other merchants preferred travelling to Lviv, like *cives* Martin Wasserbroth *de Romano Foro* (1469).<sup>558</sup> The inhabitants did not only pursue trade, but also handiwork. In 1436, Iohann the tailor in Roman sends his son to learn how to cut cloth in Brașov.<sup>559</sup>

In the long run, the creation of a bishopric (Metropolitan Church for a short period of time) here made the town fare much better than otherwise. The rulers endowed it with domains, some even near town, and also gave it mills, customs exemptions, and bridge tax income. The town also had serfs tied to the bishopric, who were taken out of the authority of the *șoltuz* or of the ruler's officials.<sup>560</sup> The town continues to thrive well into the 1700s.

<sup>553</sup> *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 10, 19, 35; Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, pp. 143–146.

<sup>554</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 351, doc. CLV; Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum*, tom IV, p. 16; Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 97; *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 10, 19.

<sup>555</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 11, 20, 59, 65; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>556</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>557</sup> Manolescu, *Comerțul*, pp. 261–262.

<sup>558</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, p. 11.

<sup>559</sup> DRH, D, I, p. 323, doc. 224.

<sup>560</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 103, doc. 70; III, p. 71, doc. 39.

*Siret*

A town by the same name emerged on the upper reaches of the Siret river, and it was one of the oldest in Moldavia. It was claimed that this was the residence of a local state, overrun by the armies of the Hungarian king around 1350.<sup>561</sup> This theory was also given credence since the settlement was chosen over at least two decades as the first residence for the country. This was the home of Dragoș and his direct follower, Sas, for Bogdan, Lațcu and Petru I (in the first part of his reign). Chronicles credit Dragoș with the foundation (*descălecatul*) of the town and the creation of a residence in Siret, while Sas allegedly built a fortalice on the neighbouring hill of Sasca.<sup>562</sup> No fragments of walls, nor the palace have yet been discovered, but we may assume that the church of the Holy Trinity in town and the few traces in the defensive moat with a wooden palisade at its base were part of the original fortification. Research performed to locate the old residence must be extended to the area where this church stands, since most of these churches (erected by rulers) were built in the Middle Ages within fortified residences. The unsteady political climate of the 15th century would have discouraged rulers from building churches in an open, unprotected place. The charred remains found suggest that the fortification was probably destroyed in a fire in the fourth decade of the 15th century.<sup>563</sup>

The topography of the place has not allowed the town to develop on the hill where Holy Trinity stood. On the terrace of the neighbouring hill, excavations indicate a pre-urban settlement in mid 14th century, where craftsmen's workshops were already active (ovens for the purpose of firing iron ore were discovered). A good many of the ceramic items found here are attributed to a group of German settlers, who probably came from Poland shortly before the principality of Moldavia emerged.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 280–281.

<sup>562</sup> Neculce, *O samă*, pp. 161–162; Reli, *Orașul Siret*, pp. 20–23, 94.

<sup>563</sup> Lucian Chițescu, "Cercetările arheologice din orașul Siret," *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor*, vol. XII, no. 3 (1975), p. 53.

<sup>564</sup> Matei, "Câteva considerații," pp. 21–23; Victor Spinei, Elena Gherman, "Șantierul arheologic Siret (1993)," *AM*, vol. 18 (1995), p. 232.



It was also claimed that Siret developed from two cores, a Catholic-German one, and an Orthodox-Romanian one. The latter supposedly existed south-east of the German area, aside from the church of the Holy Trinity.<sup>565</sup> Archaeological excavations, which focused on the surroundings of this church, indicate that they were less inhabited. The dwellings uncovered can be dated to fairly vast period, starting mid 14th century and ending in the late Middle Ages, but their density and the archaeological material are no match to the ones in the colonist-inhabited neighbourhood.<sup>566</sup> The existence of a *suburbio*, probably inhabited by Romanians, is confirmed by a document passed by Petru Aron (1456).<sup>567</sup> Current data at hand prevent us from determining the role this suburb had in the emergence of the town. This was likely a settlement existing before the arrival of the settlers, which remained on the town's outskirts until today (at some 300 m from the centre). Settlers coalesced in the centre of the future town, around the church of St John the Baptist, where research has shown a high habitation density.<sup>568</sup> In 1371, Lațcu decided to create a Catholic bishopric here, indicating that Siret was on its way to become a town.<sup>569</sup>

Few medieval sources documenting the town have been preserved. The activity of the bishopric is not too well-known either, probably because many bishops never physically lived here.<sup>570</sup> The town was occupied by both Franciscan, and Dominican monks. The Franciscan were the first, and their church (Holy Virgin) became the see in 1371.<sup>571</sup> The Dominicans arrived somewhat later, before 1378.<sup>572</sup> They were the recipients of Petru I's mother, Margaret, who helped them build the church of St John the Baptist. At his mother's request, Petru donates in 1384 the income from the scales (*libra*) in town to the church.<sup>573</sup> In 1391, some miracles were worked at the same church, and this became a pilgrimage site.<sup>574</sup>

<sup>565</sup> Matei, "Câteva considerații," pp. 22–24.

<sup>566</sup> Spinei, Gherman, "Șantierul arheologic Siret," pp. 229–250; Chițescu, "Cercetările arheologice," pp. 48–53.

<sup>567</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 779, doc. 230.

<sup>568</sup> Matei, "Câteva considerații," pp. 20–23.

<sup>569</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 168, doc. 131.

<sup>570</sup> C. Auner, "Episcopia de Siret," *RC*, vol. II (1913), pp. 226–245; Moisescu, *Catolicismul în Moldova*, pp. 83–85, 122–124.

<sup>571</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 160, doc. 124; p. 168, doc. 131.

<sup>572</sup> Filitti, *Din arhivele Vaticanului*, vol. I, p. 9, doc. IV.

<sup>573</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

<sup>574</sup> Loenertz, "Le Société de Frères Pérégrinants," p. 33; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 19.

The creation of the church of St John in the same period is an indirect indication of the date inhabitants received the privilege that set their right to autonomy in a more enduring form. The settlers probably enjoyed some rights from their very arrival, but the process of gaining autonomy was gradual. The church of St John was not raised on the outskirts, but right in the middle of the town, in its central marketplace. St John the Baptist became the patron of the town, and his image was made a part of town seal emblem, suggesting that it was this church, and not that of the bishopric that became the main spiritual landmark in the community.<sup>575</sup> The saint's presence in the seal is no accident. The right to seal was granted by the lord of a subservient community together with the privilege, and in this case, the lord was the ruler, Petru I. Surely, the granting of this privilege to the German community was also supported by his Catholic mother, Margaret. Document terminology is an indication of different statuses: in 1370, Sire is called *oppidum*, but becomes a *civitas* in 1384.<sup>576</sup> The results of archaeological excavations confirm that a typically urban level of habitation had been reached around 1400.<sup>577</sup> The privileged status was probably extended in the 15th century over the inhabitants in the suburb.

By 1400, Siret was one of the largest towns in Moldavia, and its merchants conducted business with Polish towns.<sup>578</sup> Some changes occurred during Alexandru the Good's reign. In 1408, he acknowledges Siret's status as a customs point for merchants crossing over towards Cernăuți and Poland.<sup>579</sup> However, in 1421, he decides to transfer by appanage Siret and the village of Volovăț to his former wife, Rimgaila, cousin of the Polish king and sister of the Grand Duke of Lithuania. This was not a donation per se, since the privileged status of the inhabitants prevented it, but only a transfer of rights. Rimgaila was to levy in Siret all that was once owed to the ruler: customs duties, income, mill taxes, pond taxes, etc. This concession was only temporary and lasted during Rimgaila's lifetime.<sup>580</sup> Siret was returned to the ruler, but its income continued to be proposed as an exchange item in various cases.<sup>581</sup> In

<sup>575</sup> Vîrtosu, "Din sigilografia," pp. 476–477.

<sup>576</sup> DH, vol. I, part 2, p. 160, doc. 124; DRH, A, I, p. 1, doc. 1.

<sup>577</sup> Matei, "Câteva considerații," pp. 24–25.

<sup>578</sup> Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial," p. 85.

<sup>579</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>580</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 69, doc. 48.

<sup>581</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 325, doc. 231.

1455, Petru Aron was willing to transfer it as appanage to Lady Mary, consort to Ilie I, in exchange for Hotin.<sup>582</sup>

The change in status is also noticeable when Siret boyars (probably judges) stop being mentioned. The first one known is one Roman, certified in 1399.<sup>583</sup> Between 1407 and 1415, the ruler's representative is Vlad.<sup>584</sup> Following 1421, these officials cease to appear. Their presence can be tied to a supposed county of Siret, since all other judges are recorded in county seats. After the ruling authority relinquishes its rights in Siret, the county was probably merged with Suceava. Under Ștefan the Great, the ruler's rights in the town are restored, and a *vor-nic* is instated here.<sup>585</sup> This is also the time when neighbouring villages begin being donated, and some donations even affect the town.<sup>586</sup> The ruler's mills, a *sladniță* (where beer was brewed) and all of the *camena* are granted to the monastery at Putna, which receives the right to have a ferry over the Siret.<sup>587</sup>

The Saxons dominated the urban community in the 14th–15th centuries. They were also joined by an Armenian community. They had lived here before 1388, when the town of Siret is mentioned as part of the Armenian centres under the jurisdiction of the Armenian bishop in Lviv.<sup>588</sup> In 1507, their church still existed, and was only destroyed in 1551 by order from Ștefan Rareș. It was later rebuilt.<sup>589</sup> Some of the Armenian merchants took merchandise to Lviv, while others traded wine in the country.<sup>590</sup> Since the Siret area did not favour viticulture, wine was made in Cotnari.<sup>591</sup> Even though it existed ever since the end of the 14th century, the office of *șoltuz* is certified barely in the next century, and its occupant is mentioned by name only in 1591.<sup>592</sup>

Siret begins a slow decline in the 16th century. It lives on as a local marketplace between Suceava and Cernăuți, but it does not seem to be a match for these two towns. The former was the main residence of the ruler, while the latter, the last town before the Polish border,

<sup>582</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 773, doc. 228.

<sup>583</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 11, doc. 9.

<sup>584</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 30, doc. 22; p. 38, doc. 27.

<sup>585</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 334, doc. 220.

<sup>586</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 176, doc. 123; p. 183, doc. 128; 334, doc. 220.

<sup>587</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 287, doc. 192; III, p. 62, doc. 36; p. 144, doc. 75.

<sup>588</sup> Panăitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru," p. 47.

<sup>589</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, p. 759.

<sup>590</sup> Iorga, *Relațiile economice*, pp. 20, 27.

<sup>591</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 78, doc. 96.

<sup>592</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 334, doc. 220; *Documente și însemnări*, p. 172, doc. 80.

becomes a main customs point and hosts a grand fair.<sup>593</sup> The old German community gradually left town, and its churches fell to ruin or were taken over by the Orthodox Christians.<sup>594</sup> The church of St John the Baptist was torn down during the persecution of the Armenians and the Protestants under Ștefan Rareș (1551).<sup>595</sup>

### *Soroca*

The town of Soroca emerged by a ford of the Dniester, in an area ravaged by Mongol and Cossack attacks.<sup>596</sup> A stronghold existed near town, but its role in the town's emergence is still unclear, since the exact date when it was built cannot be ascertained. To protect the Dniester ford, Ștefan the Great erected a wooded and earthen fortalice.<sup>597</sup> The same prince saw to it that the fortalice would be supplied with all that was fitting, so he subordinated several villages to it.<sup>598</sup> A few decades later, Petru Rareș erected a stone stronghold, during his second reign (1541–1546).<sup>599</sup> Since the relation between the town and the stronghold cannot be determined, we will assume that the town is older, and owes its development to its location by the ford. The customs tax instated by Moldavian rulers here is mentioned ever since 1419. Right across the stream, in Podolia, the Iampol customs tax was paid.<sup>600</sup> Soroca was also the seat of a county that, despite being in north-eastern Moldavia, was seen as part of the Lower Country.<sup>601</sup> Its belonging to this part of the country shows that the land of Soroca was under direct control by the Mongols until at least 1367–1368, when they were ousted. We know nothing of the inhabitants or their rights. The *şoltuz* is certified in the 17th century.<sup>602</sup>

<sup>593</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 209.

<sup>594</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 25, 81.

<sup>595</sup> Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire*, p. 39; *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 25, 81, 183.

<sup>596</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, pp. 94, 195, 203; *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 236; II, p. 208.

<sup>597</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 454, doc. 253.

<sup>598</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 106, doc. 104.

<sup>599</sup> Costin, *Cronica polonă*, p. 205; Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, p. 91.

<sup>600</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 43–44.

<sup>601</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 159.

<sup>602</sup> DIR, XVII, A, I, p. 137, doc. 196.

*Suceava*

Suceava developed around one of the oldest known settlements in Moldavia. In the eastern side of the town, research certifies ever since the 13th century a habitation extended on a surface almost one kilometre in diameter. Despite its low density, it offered archaeologists surface dwellings, made of wood and earth. Towards the end of the 13th-early 14th century, the area of this settlement narrowed to 3–4 hectares, into a fortalice with natural defences to its south and east, as well as a defensive moat and wooden palisade to the west. The core of this fortalice stands where the church of Mirăuți was erected in 1380–1390. A local ruler probably resided here. The surroundings had dwellings and workshops for potters and blacksmiths, who worked for the residence.<sup>603</sup>

Some research places the *Jassi* (the Alans) in the local authority centre in Suceava. Virgil Ciocâltan believes that the place name Ițcani, which endured in the name of one settlement near town (originally controlled by a grand boyar, Iațco), supposedly referred to this *Jassi*. Their presence was tied to Mongol domination, who probably set up a fortification to guard this part of Moldavia.<sup>604</sup> As in Iași, this theory still requires archaeological confirmation, which is yet to be provided. Up to now, excavations have shown that, after 1350, the settlement rising near the fortification in Suceava entered a pre-urban state. Various crafts were practiced, metal was processed, and ceramics reveals obvious progress, especially in the last quarter of the century. Craftsmen already have a tendency to group into their own neighbourhood and work to sell for their own purposes.<sup>605</sup> When Petru I decided to move here the Siret capital, he also considered the amenities provided by the settlement for his retinue, as well as for a garrison. Since the old fortification in Suceava had become obsolete, Petru decided to build another palace and a new stronghold. On a terrace further west, a building of wood and stone was to be the residence of the ruler.<sup>606</sup> The new construction led to a new outline for the settlement, since there

<sup>603</sup> Matei, *Contribuții arheologice*, pp. 66–67, 78–81; M. D. Matei, “Premisele formării orașului medieval Suceava și rolul așezării până la mijlocul secolului al XIV-lea,” *SCIVA*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1 (1977), pp. 82–83.

<sup>604</sup> Ciocâltan, “Alanii,” pp. 941–945.

<sup>605</sup> Mircea D. Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 62–65.

<sup>606</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 616, doc. 168; DRH, A, I, p. 25, doc. 18; II, p. 320, doc. 212.

are clues that some dwellings already here had been dismantled. The ruler's residence (the political focus) had the marketplace (the economic focus) as its point of reference, and this is how the first streets were outlined. The rulers who followed Petru extended and modernized the residence, which ended up covering around 0.26 hectares. The entire compound which belonged to the ruler, the garden included, had a surface of around two hectares.<sup>607</sup> Suceava's position as a main centre for Moldavia led to reinforced defences, with Petru building two stone fortresses. The first fortress was built close to the road to Transylvania, in Șcheia, at around 2.5 km north-west of the town, while the second one was erected east of town (1388).<sup>608</sup> When compared to the one in Șcheia, the latter was large enough to house the ruler's family, his retinue, and a garrison. Suceava's significance is also confirmed by its inclusion in the Kiev list.<sup>609</sup> The large stronghold was completed by Alexandru the Good, who abandons the stronghold in Șcheia, which was on unsteady ground. Part of the stone here is used in the large citadel and in the palace in town.<sup>610</sup> The restoration work carried out by Ștefan the Great made the stronghold in Suceava almost unconquerable. It withstood Mehmed II's attack in 1476, and that of Polish King John I Albert, in 1497.<sup>611</sup>

The transfer of the capital to Suceava coincided with the laying of new foundations for the town. Archaeological research shows that the ruler's taking up residence here provided incentive for its growth, since it lured merchants and tradesmen in, and since the great boyars and the high clergy assembled here.<sup>612</sup> The excavations around the palace confirm a high habitation density: almost 30 dwellings were discovered, some very close to another. The distance between houses ranged between 2–3 or 5–6 metres, and they tended to be aligned contiguously. Their inventory shows they belonged to merchants and wealthy craftsmen or boyars. Even though the town was destroyed repeatedly in 1476, 1485, and 1497, the area was rebuilt each time, with better houses, made of stone. Only around 100 cellars are left of

<sup>607</sup> Matei, Emandi, *Cetatea de scaun*, pp. 130–165; Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 288–289.

<sup>608</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 603, doc. 164; Diaconu, Constantinescu, *Cetatea Șcheia*, pp. 31–44.

<sup>609</sup> *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.

<sup>610</sup> Diaconu, Constantinescu, *Cetatea Șcheia*, pp. 96–97; Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 67–69, 76–81.

<sup>611</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 11, 20–21, 34.

<sup>612</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 71–73.

these houses, initially reinforced with wood, then with stone and brick. The area where they were discovered covers around 18 hectares.<sup>613</sup> The regulated outline of this part of town reveals urban planning, that is owed to the ruler (who allowed the land to be occupied) and the colonists (who populated and organized it). The urban space began to be reshaped ever since Petru I's reign. Descriptions and modern town outlines confirm the existence of a central marketplace, shaped like a trapezium, bordered by narrow and long plots, in an orderly row. Later on, the marketplace was split in half: the lower market, paved (*târgul de jos*), which had the Saxon quarter to its north and the residence to its south, and the upper one (*târgul de sus*), which bordered the Armenian quarter.<sup>614</sup> In or near the town marketplace, a Catholic church was erected, two Armenian ones, and probably an Orthodox one. A 1461 document mentions an Orthodox church, which supposedly burned several years earlier, the one testifying being a "Russian" priest.<sup>615</sup> The distribution of colonists show them to have arrived here in an organized fashion, based on privileges which granted special status to each ethnic group. Petru I was the one to grant these privileges, having invited them in prior to 1388, when both the town, and the Armenian group are certified.<sup>616</sup> The first known leader in town is Nichil (probably German), who is referred to as a *voit*. He is mentioned as a witness along with an Armenian *voit* in a 1449 trial.<sup>617</sup> Significantly, this document calls the townspeople *meastici*. Suceava is featured as a *miașto* in the 1408 privilege, in the *Cronica anonimă a Moldovei*, and in the town seal legend as well.<sup>618</sup> Terminology confirms the part played by settlers in the town's emergence.

Marco Bandini recorded valuable information provided by the locals: "once, the inhabitants were full-blooded Saxons, mingled with Hungarians and Italians."<sup>619</sup> The Saxons and the Hungarians were a substantial group here. The ancient chroniclers even credited some

<sup>613</sup> Diaconu, "Observații cu privire," pp. 267–277; Matei, Emandi, *Cetatea de scaun*, pp. 158–162.

<sup>614</sup> Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 263–268; Gheorghiu, "Suceava medievală," pp. 82–86; *Atlas istoric. Suceava*, maps V–VII.

<sup>615</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100.

<sup>616</sup> Panăitescu, "Hrisovul lui Alexandru," p. 47; *Suceava. File*, vol. I, p. 79, doc. 2.

<sup>617</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4; D, I, p. 178, doc. 110.

<sup>618</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 9, 10; Gorovei, "Note de istorie," pp. 203–204.

<sup>619</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 220.

“Hungarian makers of sheepskin coats (*szücs*)” with the town name.<sup>620</sup> None of their churches endured to this day, so we may only venture a guess as to where their neighbourhood was. The location of the first Catholic church is still debated. Close to the buildings commanded by Petru in town, some 60 metres north-west, archaeologists found the remains of a stone church surrounded by a cemetery, dated at the end of the 14th century. The peculiarity of this construction for Moldavia, combined with its size, its thick walls (one metre), and the two towers on the western front led the ones who studied it initially to claim it belonged to Catholics. More recently, Petre Ș. Năsturel identified it as the Church of St Demetrius, founded by boyar Iațco and mentioned in a 1395 document.<sup>621</sup> Since a church with the same patron was built nearby in 1534–1535, he seems to have made a solid case.<sup>622</sup> However, there are several questions which beg answers. The above-cited 1395 document refers in fact to two “small monasteries,” and another foundation of Iațco is mentioned. This was the monastery of Ițcani, itself north-west of Suceava, several kilometres away. Why would a boyar build two monasteries, so close to each other, and near the same town? The front towers are in themselves out of the ordinary, since they are not specific to Orthodox churches and are not found throughout Moldavia. The oldest Orthodox churches in the country, those in Siret and Rădăuți, have a different style. Furthermore, the church in point here is by no means small, as the 1395 document suggests. What is certain, though, is that it did not last very long. Around 1410, it was dismantled, probably on account of some flaws in its construction. They were indicated by large cracks found in its base, probably due to human error in its design or to an earthquake.<sup>623</sup>

After this church was destroyed, Catholics erected a new one, some 150 metres north-east, under Ștefan the Great. It did not fare too well either, since archaeological excavations indicate it was systematically torn down in mid 16th century, during Ștefan Rareș’s persecutions (1551).<sup>624</sup> In the latter half of that century, as Catholicism makes a come-back, the last church in the Catholic quarter is erected, and

<sup>620</sup> Ureche, *Letopisețul*, p. 65; Drăganu, *Toponimie*, p. 69.

<sup>621</sup> DH, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 18, doc. 41; Năsturel, “D’un document byzantin,” pp. 345–351.

<sup>622</sup> Matei, Rădulescu, Artimon, “Bisericile,” pp. 547–548.

<sup>623</sup> Matei, Rădulescu, Artimon, “Bisericile,” pp. 542–547.

<sup>624</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 25.



lasts until the 17th century included.<sup>625</sup> Ultimately, another Catholic church was in the garden of the palace, catering to the servants of the prince here.<sup>626</sup> Based on this data, we can assume that the Saxons and Hungarians had a neighbourhood which looked after one side of the town marketplace, the one north-east. The Catholics were superior in numbers until around 1500, when the Romanian population begins to increase dramatically. In 1510 and 1514, the town representative (called *Groff*) has a Romanian name (Stan),<sup>627</sup> only to bear a Hungarian one in 1526 (Ianuș).<sup>628</sup> There are Catholic *șoltuzes* until the former half of the 16th century, but this community loses significance after the Reform.<sup>629</sup>

In Suceava, the Armenians made up one of the largest Moldavian communities.<sup>630</sup> They created their quarter north-west of the town market, along the Main Armenian Street.<sup>631</sup> In town, they erected three churches: Holy Cross, initially made of wood and rebuilt in stone in 1521, St Mary (in the middle of the market) and St Simeon (1513). Several kilometres south-west of town, they built the monastery of Hagigadar (1512).<sup>632</sup> All were destroyed during the 1551 banishment, and were rebuilt later.<sup>633</sup> The Ruthenians or the “Russians” had separate status. They initially had a settlement distinct from the town, which was merged over the 15th–16th centuries.<sup>634</sup> On its southern edge, there was another settlement separate from the town, the one inhabited by the Mongol slaves.<sup>635</sup>

The town’s surface increases substantially in the 15th century: a marginal neighbourhood is mentioned, and there were six priests,

<sup>625</sup> I. Nestor et al., “Șantierul arheologic Suceava,” *MCA*, vol. 5 (1959), pp. 609–611; Trifu Martinovici, Ștefan Olteanu, “Șantierul Suceava,” *MCA*, vol. 6 (1959), pp. 687–689; Diaconu, “Contribuții la cunoașterea,” pp. 913–923; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 41; vol. V, pp. 181–182, 239.

<sup>626</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, pp. 182, 239; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 220; Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, p. 285.

<sup>627</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 204, doc. 368; p. 226, doc. 408.

<sup>628</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță*, p. 567, doc. 120.

<sup>629</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță*, p. 567, doc. 120; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 292, doc. 534.

<sup>630</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 392, doc. 276; II, p. 9, doc. 7; p. 10, doc. 9; *Din tezaurul*, p. 68, doc. 94.

<sup>631</sup> Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 274–275.

<sup>632</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 21, doc. 14; *Călători străini*, vol. IV, p. 346.

<sup>633</sup> Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire*, pp. 34–39.

<sup>634</sup> *Atlas istoric. Suceava*, pp. VIII–IX; map VIII.

<sup>635</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 278, doc. 244.

each with his church, probably.<sup>636</sup> This is also the time when the first streets are mentioned: 1448 mentions “the street leading to the fortress,” while 1481 mentions the “Russian street” in an inscription.<sup>637</sup> The first one led to the east fortress, while the second was in the “Russian” or Ruthenian quarter, located north and gradually merged into the town.<sup>638</sup> This was when no church was erected in the centre. The area was densely inhabited and allowed for no new places of worship to be built, since they took up large stretches of land.

The town inhabitants took advantage of a provision in the 1408 privilege, which forced the Poles to sell cloth by retail only in Suceava. This provision instated a true staple right for this type of merchandise. Those who were to take advantage were the merchants in town, who bought the cloth from the Poles and resold it in the country. The same document saw the ruler as keeping an important source of income, the greater customs tax, levied in Suceava. Alexandru the Good and the rulers who followed allowed the merchants in Lviv to hold a house as a commercial warehouse in Suceava. The house was to be owned by a Pole, who was not allowed to turn into a inn or butcher’s shop, nor a bakery, beer or mead brewery, unless he paid the same taxes as the rest of the inhabitants. This measure was aimed at protecting the Suceavans from unfair competition.<sup>639</sup> Along with trade, archaeological excavations also show crafts to have been pursued in Suceava. Pottery was widespread, and those engaged in it grouped to form a marginal neighbourhood, south-west of the town. Along with various types of pottery, it also produced tiles for stoves. Craftsmen supplied the demand from the ruler, boyars, and probably well-to-do townspeople. The manufacture of tiled stoves in the urban area begins to be widespread in the latter half of the 15th century. Other crafts that excavations and documents indicate are the weapon crafting, leatherworking, the processing of metal and bone, and others.<sup>640</sup> Some of these craftsmen would group together in a quarter south-east of the central marketplace.<sup>641</sup>

<sup>636</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 4, doc. 4; p. 142, doc. 100; p. 142, doc. 100.

<sup>637</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 392, doc. 276; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 292; Balș, *Bisericile și mănăstirile*, pp. 535–536.

<sup>638</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 142, doc. 100; *Atlas istoric. Suceava*, pp. VIII–IX, map VIII.

<sup>639</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>640</sup> DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 77, doc. 134; p. 113, doc. 203; Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 88–91.

<sup>641</sup> Emandi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 283–285.

Public works were also performed in Suceava. The water supply was provided by the ruling authority, which did, however, involve the townspeople as well. The local master potters created the gutter tiles for the piping which, ever since the 15th century, brought water into the town and into the large stronghold further east. Later on, they were compounded by a drain pipe made of stone slabs and brick edges, required to drain the water and the sewage from the palace and the central area.<sup>642</sup> The few documents preserved relate nothing specific on the public administration tasks of the authorities or the part played by inhabitants in the town's maintenance. The townspeople probably joined in the paving works of the two markets or the reinforcing of defensive structures around town, under the supervision of *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari*.

After 1400, the town was fortified sparsely, not with stone walls, but rather with a moat (9–20 metres wide at its access point), with an earth mound and palisade made of tree trunk some 4.50 metres high. This enclosure, the largest known in Moldavia, circumscribed the town in an arc, influencing its topography, since it contained farmland, but also left out some marginal quarters. The surface within the fortification of the town was 108 ha.<sup>643</sup> Despite not having been discovered yet, the town's exits were three gates, one south, towards Baia and Neamț, one north, towards Siret, and a third one to the stronghold further east.<sup>644</sup> As in Baia or Iași, the town fortifications did not have a military purpose, since they never protected the settlement from various attacks. They were more likely aimed at controlling the access of people and merchandise in town, separating it from other settlements, different in status. The reinforcements here did not prevent it from being overrun and torched by the Turks in 1476 and 1485, and by the Poles, in 1497.<sup>645</sup> Each time, restoration followed destruction. The defensive moat falls into disuse by the end of the 15th century. On the southern edge, where the Mongol slaves used to live, an artisan quarter arises. The mention made to a new street and the existence of a church here in 1528 (Holy Resurrection) reveal that this quarter had been

<sup>642</sup> Trifu Martinovici, Al. Andronic, "Șantierul arheologic Suceava," *MCA*, vol. 9 (1970), p. 384.

<sup>643</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 137–138; Elena Busuioc, "Șanțul de apărare al orașului Suceava din secolul al XV-lea," *MCA*, vol. 9 (1970), pp. 401–406; Emândi, *Habitatul urban*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>644</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 97–99, 154.

<sup>645</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 9, 10, 18, 19.

merged into the town for several decades.<sup>646</sup> Beyond this quarter, on the outskirts, Bogdan III the Blind began building a new seat for the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Moldavia, the church of St John the New, finished by prince Ștefăniță. Around the palace, on the land vacated by the controversial church we have mentioned above, Petru Rareș builds the church of St Demetrius.<sup>647</sup>

Since the stronghold in Suceava surrendered without a fight, the town escaped the invasion of Suleiman I in 1538 unharmed.<sup>648</sup> After 1564, the rulers of Moldavia prefer Iași even more. It was only in the next century, after switching between these two residences, that this preference turns Iași into the country's capital.

### *Târgul Frumos*

The area where Târgul Frumos developed has the highest urban density in Moldavia, with over three towns on a distance of almost 30 km: Hârlău, Cotnari and Târgul Frumos. Hârlău was probably an ancient local centre, while in Cotnari, the role played by settlers in planting vineyards and urbanization was a major one. The case of Târgul Frumos proves more difficult to study, since no sources on its status before 1400 exist, and no excavations have been performed. It first emerged as a stop-over for merchants and as an outlet for local products, where the roads linking Iași, Hârlău, Roman and Neamț crossed. The ruler created a customs house in Târgul Frumos, but not in Cotnari or in Hârlău, indicating that the settlement had a primarily commercial function ever since its beginning.<sup>649</sup> The customs taxes levied here only applied to Moldavian merchants, and not to foreign ones.

Since this town was the seat of the Cârlișău county, some historians believe it predates the emergence of Moldavia, and that it is the continuation of an older local state.<sup>650</sup> The proximity of the ancient residence in Hârlău does not support this theory. It is likely that its unusual name (*târgul frumos* means "beautiful town") may have been

<sup>646</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 278, doc. 244.

<sup>647</sup> Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală*, pp. 154–156.

<sup>648</sup> *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 535–536.

<sup>649</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41.

<sup>650</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 93, doc. 64; Giurescu, *Târguri*, pp. 301–302; Burac, *Ținuturile*, pp. 133–135.

owed to a person (as with Roman), some ruler or owner of the place, impressed by the beauty of the landscape. One of the first rulers of the country was responsible for the building of a residence here, as well as for the granting of a privilege.<sup>651</sup> Current data prevent us from identifying the above-mentioned ruler. Late, 17th century information mentions “the privilege Târgul Frumos had from voivode Ștefan.” Ștefan the Great probably only confirmed the privilege of the town, as he did in Bârlad and Vaslui.<sup>652</sup>

Târgul Frumos finds formal certification in 1448, when Petru II donates to the monastery at Proboata the wax (*camena*) in town, stating this was a tax collected off all tavern keepers.<sup>653</sup> The mention of *camena* and of several taverns show that the town had existed for at least several decades. We have no data on any colonists present here. No Catholic or Armenian churches are certified for the medieval period. Despite having probably existed since the 15th century, the first name of *șoltuz* is mentioned in a 1617 document.<sup>654</sup>

### *Tecuci*

The town of Tecuci developed on the Bârlad river valley. The distance to Bârlad, of around 40 kilometres, led to the creation of a stop-over for merchants travelling to Brăila where Tecuci would later rise. The town is first mentioned only later on, and this is explained by the fact that, until c. 1423, it was part of the land in southern Moldavia owned by Wallachia. It emerges once Ilie and Ștefan II reach an agreement in 1435, and falls under Ștefan’s property. Interestingly enough, Tecuci is called a *misto*, which leads us to believe that a group of privileged settlers had set themselves up here, with Alexandru the Good’s support.<sup>655</sup> When visiting the town, Marco Bandini noted that the townspeople still remembered a Catholic church and a large group of Hungarians, who blended in or left, over time.<sup>656</sup> In the first document where the leader of the townspeople in Tecuci is mentioned, there are also non-

<sup>651</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 596; Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 155.

<sup>652</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. III, p. 169, doc. 100; p. 274, doc. 159.

<sup>653</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 411, doc. 288.

<sup>654</sup> DIR, A, XVII, IV, p. 100, doc. 139.

<sup>655</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

<sup>656</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 112.

Romanian names: Andreica *voit*, Gociman.<sup>657</sup> Nothing is known of these communities and of their fate. The modern town outline still allows us to locate the old central marketplace, at the crossroads of the routes from Galați, Focșani and Bârlad. Tecuci was the seat of the county by the same name, and Ștefan the Great opened up a customs house for foreign merchants here in 1460.<sup>658</sup>

### *Tighina*

Tighina is mentioned in 1408 as a customs house by a ford of the Dniester.<sup>659</sup> An alternate route of the “Moldavian road” crossed eastward through here, as it branched out of the main road, Iași—Cetatea Albă. A fortress was built to guard the passage. It was mentioned in 1538, in the *Cronica moldo-polonă*, as it was overrun by the Ottomans.<sup>660</sup> Only two moats, near the stone fortress the Ottomans built, remain out of the old (probably wooden) fortress.<sup>661</sup> Since it did not meet the mark of other strongholds in the country, no *pârcălab* from Tighina was ever recorded. A lower ranking official was present here, and he was mentioned in 1452.<sup>662</sup> In 1456, Petru Aron temporarily closes down the customs house in Tighina and moves it to Lăpușna, but keeps the taxes for the crossing of the Dniester. In 1460, the customs house is reinstated by Ștefan the Great.<sup>663</sup>

A settlement developed near the fortification, and became a county seat, and this is why we include Tighina among towns. All Moldavian counties had their residence in towns. In 1538, Suleiman the Magnificent merges the town and a sizeable portion of southern Basarabia to the Ottoman Empire, so the texts documenting the institutions of the town and the inhabitants have been lost. The new rulers gave it a different name, Bender.<sup>664</sup>

<sup>657</sup> DIR, XVII, A, I, p. 102, doc. 144.

<sup>658</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>659</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>660</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 174, 184.

<sup>661</sup> Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, p. 109.

<sup>662</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 19, doc. 17.

<sup>663</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 788, doc. 231; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>664</sup> *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 270, 536; *Călători străini*, vol. II, p. 101.

*Trotuș*

The town of Trotuș emerged north of the river by the same name, where the most important road from Transylvania entered Moldavia.<sup>665</sup> It is first mentioned as a customs house in the 1408 privilege.<sup>666</sup> Trotuș is the only mining town east of the Carpathians. The salt, in layers close to the surface here, set the town into motion.<sup>667</sup> One of the first mentions of the salt operations (the *ocna*) is brought by the King Matthias Corvinus' attack on Moldavia, in 1467: "then came Matthias, the Hungarian king, with a great army in Trotuș, where the salt mine is."<sup>668</sup> From here (*oppidum Tatus*), the king also issued a document.<sup>669</sup> The settlement was set on fire then, sharing the fate of Bacău, Roman or Baia.<sup>670</sup> Saltpetre was another natural resource.<sup>671</sup>

The name of the town is not related to salt. The most persuasive explanation claims that it originated in the name of *Tatars* ascribed to Mongols both in the Romanian-inhabited area (*tătari*), and in the one inhabited by Hungarians (*tatár*). Merchandise records in Brașov (who is connected via a direct road to Trotuș) note the town as *Tataross*, *Tataruss*.<sup>672</sup> *Tatár-ós* probably meant "the village, road, river, etc. of the Tatars" in Hungarian.<sup>673</sup> Another theory would be a possible Hungarian form of the name *Tătărăși*, used to indicate Mongol villages in Moldavia. Since they are found near almost half the old towns east of the Carpathians, such a settlement was probably present near Trotuș as well. Regardless of whether it was a local or foreign name or not, the Hungarians are responsible for the pronunciation. Archaeological research suggests that Trotuș resembled the town of Siret in some respects. The settlement had two cores, which centred around the Orthodox church and the Catholic one. The Orthodox core further north is older, and probably stemmed from a local centre, which covered the valley of the Trotuș river, later turned into a county in its own

<sup>665</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 192; vol. II, pp. 212–214.

<sup>666</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176.

<sup>667</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 248.

<sup>668</sup> *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

<sup>669</sup> DH, vol. II, part 2, p. 177, doc. 156.

<sup>670</sup> Gonța, "Strategia lui Ștefan," p. 1132.

<sup>671</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 132.

<sup>672</sup> Nussbächer, "Un document," p. 429.

<sup>673</sup> Iordan, *Toponimia*, p. 123.

right (and with its own judges).<sup>674</sup> The Orthodox church dates to the end of the 14th century—early 15th. It was initially made of wood, and was rebuilt in stone after a fire which devastated it at the end of the 15th century (1467?). A study of the foundations of the stone church shows a somewhat crude work, the walls not having an even thickness. It was surrounded by a cemetery, where the townspeople of high standing, or those donating had been buried.<sup>675</sup> The Catholic core, especially inhabited by Hungarians and probably Germans, was around the stone church of St Nicholas, in the southern side of the settlement. There were two other Catholic churches near town: one of stone, another of wood.<sup>676</sup> Archaeologists focused only on the Orthodox core, neglecting the Catholic one, which only recently came under scrutiny. In the beginning, tombs from the area of the old Catholic church and post-1350 dwellings have been discovered.<sup>677</sup>

Late sources show that the *șoltuz* in Trotuș had the right to try serious offences and to apply capital punishment.<sup>678</sup> Since similar rights were only encountered in Baia and Bacău up to now, all west of the Siret river, we believe the privileges to have been granted when this land was still in the grasp of the Hungarian king, in mid 14th century. In 1408, the settlement was already called Trotuș (originally *Totruș*), so, at that point, the Hungarians had arrived for several decades.<sup>679</sup> The Hungarians were joined by new groups, who crossed over around 1437, following persecutions in Hungary. In 1440, two Hungarian priests translated the Hussite Bible in Hungarian here. It was also here that György Németi copied the so-called *Münich Codex* version of the Bible in 1466.<sup>680</sup> In mid 15th century, the Hungarians were surely the majority in town, and this will be the case until 1550. In 1587, of the 12 *pârgari* mentioned in a document, six have Hungarian names.<sup>681</sup> The local tradition ascribed the Catholic church to Lady Margaret, first

<sup>674</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 195, doc. 141.

<sup>675</sup> Al. Artimon, “Noi contribuții arheologice privind istoria așezării urbane de la Trotuș,” *Carpica* (Bacău) vol. 16 (1984), pp. 101–106; Alexandru Artimon, *Orașul medieval Trotuș în secolele XIV–XVII. Geneză și evoluție* (Bacău, 2003), pp. 174–187.

<sup>676</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. V, pp. 186, 249, 422–424; Bandini, *Codex*, pp. 116–122.

<sup>677</sup> Artimon, *Orașul medieval Trotuș*, pp. 235–236; *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 2006* (Bucharest, 2007), pp. 377–379.

<sup>678</sup> Ghibănescu, *Surete*, vol. XXIV, p. 133, doc. 119.

<sup>679</sup> Moldovanu, *Toponimia Moldovei*, p. XLIX.

<sup>680</sup> Dan, *Cehi*, pp. 99–104; Manolescu, “Cultura orașenească în Moldova,” pp. 86–88.

<sup>681</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 368, doc. 454; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 507.



wife of Alexandru the Good. Since it was Hungarian in origin, she was very mindful of the Catholic communities in south-western Moldavia, where she also erected the church in Bacău.<sup>682</sup>

There are several arguments which indicate that salt operations played a part in the town's emergence, and that those receiving the privilege were Hungarian miners. The town seal has as its emblem an arm holding a hammer, a symbol of mining.<sup>683</sup> The first known *șoltuzes*, also called *birăi* in local dialect, bear Hungarian names. As the Romanians multiply in the 16th century, the custom to elect the *șoltuz* one year among the Hungarians, and another among the Romanians is also introduced here.<sup>684</sup> Several elements of organizing work in the mines reveal influences from beyond the mountains. Salt mines officially belonged to the prince, as did any mine or subterranean resource.<sup>685</sup> Following a Hungarian and Transylvania model,<sup>686</sup> salt mines were tied to the chamber of the ruler, whose representative was called a salt mines chamberlain (Rom. *cămăraș de ocnă*).<sup>687</sup> Salt was extracted just as it was in Transylvania and Wallachia, by the *măglași* (those counting the salt) and the *șalgăi* or *șagăi* (salt cutters, also made up of people from neighbouring villages). Since these names are Hungarian in origin, those who introduced them were probably the Hungarian miners.<sup>688</sup> Off the daily extraction ratio they handed over to the ruler, workers kept one part of the salt, and sold it on the internal market; they would receive another part once a year.<sup>689</sup> Later documents show that, in exchange for the hard work they did in mines, workers were exempt of most of the taxes.<sup>690</sup> The ruling authority had not accepted to include salt as merchandise in the privileges granted to foreign merchants, so as not to lose the substantial income it brought. The sale

<sup>682</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 126.

<sup>683</sup> Cernovodeanu, Mănescu, "Noile steme," p. 9.

<sup>684</sup> DIR, XVI, A, III, p. 368, doc. 454; IV, p. 12, doc. 14; p. 243, doc. 298; Bandini, *Codex*, p. 132.

<sup>685</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 503, doc. 283; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 248.

<sup>686</sup> Rady, *Medieval Buda*, p. 26.

<sup>687</sup> DIR, XVI, A, I, p. 404, doc. 367; p. 406, doc. 370; *Instituții feudale*, pp. 82, 336–337.

<sup>688</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 4, doc. 5; *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 262–295; *Dicționarul limbii române*, tom VI, p. 653; tom XI, part 1, p. 13; *Instituții feudale*, pp. 286, 463. Details in D. Vitcu, "Exploatarea sării în Moldova până la 1828," *AIIAI*, vol. XI (1974), pp. 14–18.

<sup>689</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 130.

<sup>690</sup> Iorga, "Privilegiile șangăilor," pp. 251–254.

was under more rigorous supervision than with other products.<sup>691</sup> One part of the salt given to the ruler was donated to monasteries.<sup>692</sup>

Even though this was the main pursuit, the townspeople also had other professional interests. A good number of them are noted as merchants on the Braşov market, where they brought various goods. Where the years 1503–1550 are concerned, the amount of merchandise places Trotuş among the first Moldavian towns in the cross-mountain trade.<sup>693</sup> The salt mine was only several kilometres west of the town. After 1500, a new settlement emerged near it, called Ocna, where the inhabitants of Trotuş moved after mid 17th century.<sup>694</sup> The reasons for this are somewhat obscure, and the medieval town was vacated over a long period.<sup>695</sup> Trotuş still existed around 1700, and was mentioned by Dimitrie Cantemir or the travellers crossing the area.<sup>696</sup>

### *Vaslui*

The town of Vaslui owes its name to the river it straddles, a tributary of the Bârlad. The name is Turkic in origin, as many other hydronyms ending in *-ui* ((Bahlui, Covurlui, Suhurlui, Călmăţui etc.). The influence of the Turkics, which prevailed on hydronyms more than over toponyms, was explained by the fact that they used rivers as a landmark in their periodic forays into the land of future Moldavia.<sup>697</sup>

The town is mentioned only late. In 1423, one Şerbea from Vaslui is noted as a witness in a document issued by Alexandru the Good.<sup>698</sup> Several years later, when Ilie and Ştefan II divided Moldavia among themselves (1435), Vaslui and its *ocol* enter among the properties of Ştefan. As in Tecuci, the one drafting the document uses the term of *misto* for Vaslui, since the privileged status for the community here was probably only recent.<sup>699</sup> The lack of this settlement in the Kiev list, as well as its absence in the 1408 privilege reveal it was not old. Its

<sup>691</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. I, p. 283.

<sup>692</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 52, doc. 37; III, p. 503, doc. 283.

<sup>693</sup> Manolescu, *Comerţul*, pp. 259–295.

<sup>694</sup> DIR, XVI, A, IV, p. 243, doc. 298; *Călători străini*, vol. V, p. 20.

<sup>695</sup> Vitcu, “Exploatarea sării,” pp. 18–20.

<sup>696</sup> Cantemir, *Descrierea stării*, vol. II, p. 161; *Călători străini*, vol. VIII, pp. 324–325, 346.

<sup>697</sup> Spinei, *Realităţi etnice*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>698</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 79, doc. 54.

<sup>699</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenesti înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

development was prompted by its location by a crossroads: an alternate route of the “Moldavian road” (Iași-Bârlad-Danube) met the road coming from Roman.<sup>700</sup>

Due to the long distances to neighbouring towns, Vaslui became a mandatory stop-over. A heightening in trade after the 1408 privilege was issued made the settlement here thrive, set itself apart from nearby settlements and garner the attention of the prince. It first becomes the administrative centre of the area where it was located, and the ruler then creates a fortified residence here. Șerbea probably acted as a judge for the ruler in Vaslui. We can have this date as a final reference for the moment when the inhabitants settled by the ruler near the residence received a privilege. The one granting it was Alexandru the Good, the document also containing, along with the usual provisions (personal freedom for the inhabitants etc.) a tax provision (exemption from the lesser customs tax). The phrase “the law of old” in the renewal of town rights granted by Ștefan the Great in 1491 refers to Alexandru’s privilege. This document also contained the provision of a symbolical one fish per cartload, as it did for the townspeople of Bârlad. As one of the main products to be carried on the road to the Danube, as even the 1408 document hints, the fish trade was an incentive in the town’s growth.<sup>701</sup> After 1426, when Kilia becomes a Moldavian province, the fish trade, as well as other trade venues on the road crossing Vaslui, receives a boost and ranks the town even higher.<sup>702</sup> This explains why it was here as well that fish was a staple of the town seal.<sup>703</sup> The town population was probably mixed: Hungarians, Saxons, Romanians, and Armenians. The precarious state of town documents leads to no other information being preserved for the 15th–16th centuries, save for the names of several persons. Local tradition, as recorded by passionate observer Marco Bandini, would note that the Hungarians were in great numbers when the town emerged.<sup>704</sup> In 1589, the town still had one group of Hungarians. Petru the Lama asked *civibus nostris ungaris, saxonibus, polonis* in many towns, Vaslui included, to accept the Jesuits in

<sup>700</sup> DRH, A, I, p. 11, doc. 9; Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; Möhlenkamp, “Réflexions,” pp. 4–16.

<sup>701</sup> Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 630, doc. 176; DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; Möhlenkamp, “Réflexions,” p. 15, note 91.

<sup>702</sup> Panaitescu, “Legăturile moldo-polone,” pp. 99–102.

<sup>703</sup> Maria Dogaru, “Un sigiliu necunoscut al orașului Vaslui din veacul al XVII-lea,” *HU*, vol. II, no. 1 (1994), pp. 91–96.

<sup>704</sup> Bandini, *Codex*, p. 100.

their midst.<sup>705</sup> In early 1600s, their church was still active.<sup>706</sup> Persecutions led to the departure or blending in of Catholics, and they were superseded by Romanians and Armenians.<sup>707</sup>

The *șoltuzes* and the *pârgari* are certified ever since the 15th century, when they exchange letters with the townspeople of Brașov.<sup>708</sup> We have no knowledge of how vast the town domain was. Only information regarding the size of the *ocol*, tied to the household of the ruler, has been kept. In 1491, Ștefan the Great added 16 villages to this *ocol* and a former village, bought by him from various owners.<sup>709</sup> Only an internal customs was set initially in town, its taxes covering the merchandise of Polish merchants in 1460.<sup>710</sup>

Alexandru the Good or his son, Ștefan II were the ones to build the residence in town.<sup>711</sup> For Ștefan II, the palace in Vaslui briefly became a main residence, and he is noted as issuing here several documents in 1439–1444.<sup>712</sup> Even the rulers who followed preferred the palace in Vaslui, and it may well be included among secondary residences in the country, like Iași, Hârlău and Huși.<sup>713</sup> The palace and the adjoining church were extended by Ștefan the Great (c. 1490–1491).<sup>714</sup> Various events took their toll on the town. It was burned down by the Mongols in 1440, and it was here that the acceptance of the payment of the first tribute to the Ottomans was negotiated (1456); in 1475, south of the town, the battle of Podu Înalt was waged, with the Ottomans defeated.<sup>715</sup>

<sup>705</sup> DH, vol. XI, B. 1900, p. LXIV.

<sup>706</sup> *Călători străini*, vol. III, p. 639; vol. IV, pp. 42–43.

<sup>707</sup> Buiucliu, *Cânt de jălire*, p. 39.

<sup>708</sup> Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. I, p. 453, doc. 181; DH, vol. XV, part 1, p. 55, doc. 45.

<sup>709</sup> DRH, A, III, p. 188, doc. 96; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. I, pp. 485–486.

<sup>710</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 57, doc. 41; p. 243, doc. 164; Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan*, vol. II, p. 271, doc. 128.

<sup>711</sup> *Cronica Cercetărilor 2001*, pp. 323–328; *Cronica Cercetărilor 2003*, pp. 362–364.

<sup>712</sup> DRH, A, I, pp. XXIX–XXXII; DRH, D, I, p. 374, doc. 271.

<sup>713</sup> DRH, A, III, pp. XXIX–XXXVII; DIR, XVI, A, I, pp. IX–XXXIX.

<sup>714</sup> Stoicescu, *Repertoriul bibliografic*, pp. 899–902, Nicolescu, *Arta*, pp. 326–327.

<sup>715</sup> DRH, A, II, p. 85, doc. 58; *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 6, 9, 15, 18.



## CONCLUSIONS

As the title of this work shows, we have focused on a less known area of Europe, that of the Romanian Principalities. Our aim was not only to probe into the urban world within our scope, but also to study the local history, economy, and society. The conclusions we have reached show that the urbanization process in Wallachia and Moldavia does not differ greatly from similar processes in the neighbouring countries, especially the ones in Central Europe. The local centres rose from old, rural or pre-urban settlements (with a commercial purpose) and became autonomous, multi-purpose towns in much the same vein as their counterparts. The main differences have to do with the delays in this process and the level of autonomy granted to town communities. Until the 14th century, there are no towns per se in the Romanian Principalities. Their land was deeply affected by migrations, from those of the Goth to those of the Turkic peoples, and all the other peoples in-between. From the Roman Empire and up to the emergence of the principalities, the first truly active medieval states here, there were no conditions for the towns to function. The proximity of the Byzantium near the Danube (after 1018) had no bearing on urban life, since the empire saw the north-Danubian areas only as borderland, under the control of the migratory peoples. Even though some historians once claimed that there was a Byzantine influence, their statement does not find support. The search for Byzantine elements in the towns of the Principalities is a dead end. Not even the harbour-towns by the mouths of the Danube and Dniester, which came under Wallachian and Moldavian control around 1400, could present us with too many Byzantine elements in their organization. To better understand the urbanization of the Principalities, we must look west. The emergence of towns coincided with the emergence of medieval Romanian states, so we could not avoid approaching this subject. Both Wallachia and Moldavia draw upon the political emancipation of Transylvanian Romanians, discontent with the king of Hungary stretching out his grasp. Written sources suggest that political reasons determined Radu Negru to leave Făgăraș, and Bogdan, Maramureș. But their crossing of the mountains from Transylvania was not an unheard-of deed. Before them, the king of Hungary had personally made attempts to extend

his power beyond the Carpathians, prior to the Mongol invasion. The mountains were no major obstacle for them, since they targeted the Black Sea, just the same as the Adriatic had been a target further south-west. To this end, the Hospitaller Knights were brought in these parts in 1211, an initiative that probably reaped some successes. The creation of the bishopric of Cumania in 1227 continued this trend, which was not only political, but also religious in nature. The onset of the Mongol invasion in 1241 held off Hungary's plans for a while. The Mongols dominated this part of Europe for over one century. Their arrival was an indirect aid to extending urbanization in the Christian kingdoms of Poland and Hungary. The kings became aware of the fact that only self-determining, fortified towns would last against "heathen" forays. The granting of privileges was in full motion, and so was the foundation of settlements, later to be turned into towns by German colonists. Since this was an orderly process, the new settlements had better legal, economic, and topographic grounds.

While urbanization was advancing at a rapid pace in Poland and Hungary, the population in lands south and east of the Carpathians adapted to Mongol rule, which held more sway over eastern areas, especially those between the Prut and the Dniester. However, small states, south of the Carpathians, maintained close ties with the Hungarian kingdom. The political crises which ravaged both Hungary, and the Mongol world, led to the emergence of the Principalities after 1300, first Wallachia, then Moldavia.

We have shown that the emergence of towns here was heavily permeated by regional specifics, a fact overlooked so far by researchers. The political climate led to a division in each of the two states: Wallachia into Muntenia and Oltenia, Moldavia into the Upper and the Lower Country. The first towns to emerge were in Muntenia, and in the Upper Country, respectively, and they were the point of origin for the expansion of the rulers, as well as the core of their power and their main residences. Some pre-urban settlements called *târgs* were already active here, and they acted as small local marketplaces. After having been conquered and merged into the new Principalities, a large number of these settlements became administrative and military centres, and they began to have specialized economies. The political stability appealed to many foreign merchants, who followed the cross-principality roads connecting the harbours by the Danube and the Black Sea ("the Brăila road" and the Moldavian alternative route for the "Mongol road"). Research into maps of the time indicates that most

future towns are on the main routes or on branches of them, travelled by merchants. The development of towns was also spurred on by their location, since most were built on river banks and where large features of the landscape joined (the fields and the hills or the hills and the mountains). This reunited the supply of quality goods from abroad with the internal demand of such products, as well as the supply of raw goods, which were largely available in the Principalities. Even though they would become towns, the locals and even the ruler still saw the settlements where any form of exchange occurred (periodic or permanent) as *târgs*. This explains how this name has come to officially designate (at least in Moldavia) both the pre-urban, and the urban settlements. This medieval perception is still felt today. Some Romanian historians tended to claim that towns in the Principalities were nothing more than the next step in the evolution of *târgs*, some of their institutions following the pattern of older ones. This statement is partly true. However, this evolution is limited to certain aspects, since towns only adopted the commercial function and location from the original *târgs*. Where institutions are concerned, towns in the Principalities are an import, and their communities took in mostly foreigners.

In our work, we have emphasized the role of colonisations, since this process was essential to the newfound purpose of urbanizing settlements, but also since it was only cursorily approached by Romanian historians. Colonisations were not new in themselves. Sources reveal that groups of Hungarians and Germans, supported by Hungarian kings, had crossed the mountains even before the Mongol invasion. This process resumed around 1300, south of the Carpathians, and further east after 1345–1347, and was later adopted directly by rulers in the Principalities. The lack of any statistics makes it impossible to come up with the accurate number of arrivals. There were probably at least several thousands in the 14th century, and they were joined by others in the next century. It appears mostly Germans (called *saszi*) took residence in towns, as they did in Transylvania and Serbia. The way they were organized and the places they set themselves up in can be identified by late, post-Reform sources. Many Germans settled in towns at the foot of mountains in Wallachia and in north-western Moldavia. Hungarians were more numerous in the central and south-western lands of Moldavia. Large groups of Armenians also came to Moldavia, settling in the north-western towns.

The main novelty brought by colonists had to do with the organization of settlements and communities. The newcomers introduced



a system they had witnessed in their lands of origin. Wallachia has a Transylvanian influence, while Moldavia, a prevailing Polish one. This explains why, south of the Carpathians, the townspeople representative is called *județ* (from *judex*), while, further east, we will find a *șoltuz* (from *scultetus*) or a *voit* (from *advocatus*). Members of town councils bore the same name in the two Principalities, *pârgari* (from *Bürger*).

All through this work, we have often pointed out how “reluctant” sources are when it comes to detailing the role of settlers in the urbanization process. However, we did identify the tradition of *descălecat* in towns, recorded by chronicles or transmitted by word of mouth in future Catholic communities, as the basis of the theory that towns in the Principalities as well (at least the old ones) were founded by a *locatio*. Urban terminology is added to the picture, by the use of important terms, such as *varoș* and *miasto*, as are place names and archaeological remains (ceramics and the new methods used to process it). We have also introduced a recent argument, topography. The medieval, relatively regulated outline was readily identifiable in Moldavia, as well as in older Wallachian towns. It had parallel streets and a central marketplace.

Regional differences are also noticeable in the timeline of urbanization. In Muntenia, the first towns emerge in the 14th century on upper ground, while in Oltenia, they are supported by the ruler and acknowledged officially barely in the 16th century. Moldavia fares better in this respect, since less time elapses between the emergence of towns in the north-west corner of the Upper Country (the latter half of the 14th century) and those in the Lower Country (15th century). In both sides, towns emerged with the support of the ruler, who granted privileges to the communities residing in pre-urban settlements. Settlers enjoyed privileges initially, and they were later extended to other social categories. The rulers followed the models they saw in neighbouring countries, allowing inhabitants the freedom to manage their community by their own customs. When put together, these customs can be seen as part of the well-known “German law” that served as a beacon for communities in the entire Central Europe. The extension of autonomy was, however, limited by the same rulers, who did not allow for more freedom (by a single-tax policy, for instance), since they did not wish to lose any income brought by towns. This was why communities in the town principalities did not become powerful enough to truly see to their own interests. They lacked the economic strength to build defensive walls and were therefore exposed to numerous attacks, a common occurrence in the Principalities. The lower

ground of Wallachia (Wallachian Plain) and the land between the Prut and the Dniester for Moldavia were deprived of towns exactly because they had no way to fend off Mongol, and later, Turkish attacks.

Urban society was no different in the principalities when compared to the rest of Europe. It was a world just as multi-faceted, cosmopolitan, and open to new ideas, as it was conservative. Wallachian and Moldavian towns were an ethnic mix of Christians. The co-existence of Saxons, Hungarians, and Armenians with Romanians led to communities with different faiths. The Catholics and the Armenians had religious freedom, since they were protected by the ruler. Whether Catholic or Orthodox, the priest was a noteworthy character in towns as well. The same cannot be said of non-Christians. Even though they were free to settle in the Principalities, they were never allowed to build places of worship. The Reform and the extension of Protestantism were seen as a threat by some rulers, so the attitude towards Protestants, and even Catholics, tends to shift in the long run.

An increasing number of scholars admit that the towns here did have a patriciate, even though we can only surmise its influence and economic strength. At least in the 15th century, the happy few, called "good people," were the townspeople holding office and grand merchants or artisans, as well as the owners of houses, lands, stores, and vineyards. They maintained relations with members of similar groups in Poland and Hungary, sent their sons to study in the universities there, and it is likely that marriages were contracted on the same level. As everywhere in Europe, they held the strings of the town. They were followed by the large group of common merchants and artisans. We are more familiar with their involvement in external trade and less with how they covered the demands of the internal market. There were also the lower classes (the serfs and the slaves), the marginals (those with untreatable diseases, the cripple, the beggars), but also people suspected of heresy (the Bogomils).

The relatively improved state of sources in the 15th century allowed the creation of a reasonable picture of the economy and organization of towns. This was otherwise the climax of towns in the Principalities, which entered the medieval economic network linking Central Europe to the Levant, Buda and Transylvanian towns to the Danube, and Kraków and Lviv to the Black Sea. Local markets were visited by an ever-growing number of Hungarian, Polish, Italian, German, Armenian, Ragusan or Turkish merchants. What they found appealing is a genuine commercial specialization of the Principalities, namely, the

vast supply of raw goods or materials: cereals, salt, honey, wax, livestock, skins, fish, wine, etc. This reveals the predominantly agricultural focus of these countries and the poor development of crafts (only supplying the internal market). The lack of any better specialization in processing and manufacturing final products allowed merchants, both foreign and local, to bring from abroad fine goods which were nowhere to be found in these areas: spices, cloth, clothing and shoes, metals or other metal items (tools and weapons). The exchanges occurred in the town marketplaces or in the fairs that began to be held around them from at least the 15th century on. The commercial focus of towns was obviously influenced by that of sovereign states. Wallachian merchants became part of the venue followed by Hungarian ones, while the Moldavian merchants adhered to the pursuits of Polish ones.

16th century rulers attempted to carry on the politics of their predecessors, to ensure that their towns acted as intermediaries in the trade between Central Europe and the East. The first signs of protectionism are noticeable. Neagoe Basarab, Bogdan III, Petru Rareș or Alexandru Lăpușneanu acknowledged the trade agreements which provided for free access of Polish and Ottoman merchants to their lands, but they actually began hindering their progress, and forced them to sell merchandise only in certain towns. Common pressures, both Polish and Ottoman, determined the rulers of late 16th century to forfeit this attitude, with negative economic consequences on the towns.

In the 14th–15th centuries, there was a balance in the relations between the towns and the rulers, with the latter group not encroaching on their rights. We have no evidence to show that the central authority interfered in towns prior to 1500. This tends to change from the 16th century on, and especially over the next two centuries, as Eastern elements find their way into towns. The number of Greeks, Jews and Armenians from south of the Danube increases, while Saxons and Hungarians dwindle and begin to blend in, after converting to Lutheranism or after mixed marriages. Political changes in the area also take their toll. By controlling the Danube and the Black Sea, the Ottoman Empire gradually brought the Principalities under its political and economic scope. Towns in the 1600s are largely different from those in the 1400s.

We hope that this work has contributed to changing how the Romanian Principalities have been perceived. Despite being on the borders of Europe, the towns and the townspeople here were entirely a part of it. The path followed by urbanization, the town institutions, society at large and its pursuits prove this beyond any doubt.

## SHORT GLOSSARY

<i>banat</i>	1. a territorial and administrative unit ruled by a <i>Ban</i> . It was used in Southern-Slavonic lands in the Hungarian kingdom, and adapted in the internal organization of Wallachia; 2. the name of this medieval structure was later assigned to the historical area of Banat, in present-day south-western Romania and north-eastern Serbia
<i>Boier</i>	land owner; person who held office
<i>Catastif</i>	the registry which kept copies of various documents issued by the <i>județ</i> or the <i>șoltuz</i> or various transactions performed in town
<i>Curte</i>	ruler's residence
<i>Greav</i>	judge of a Saxon community in Transylvania
<i>Djma</i>	tithe; a duty levied on produce gained by working the land of an estate
<i>Knez</i>	prior to the emergence of the Romanian Principalities, local ruler
<i>Knezat</i>	territory ruled by a knez in the Middle Ages
<i>Județ</i>	1. in Wallachia, the elected representative of the townspeople, mayor; 2. county in Wallachia
<i>Logofăt</i>	grand boyar, member of the ruler's council and head of the chancellery
<i>Mișel</i>	leper; later, worthless man
<i>Pârcălab</i>	castellan; in Wallachia, he was the official appointed by the ruler in town; in Moldavia, he was appointed in the stronghold
<i>Pârgar</i>	member of the town council, made up of 12 of them
<i>Prădalica</i>	a custom whereby, if a town inhabitant (or any other inhabitant of the country) died without heirs, his land was transferred to the ruler
<i>Rob</i>	slave, usually Gypsy or Mongol
<i>Rumân</i>	serf, in Wallachia
<i>Spatar</i>	official who wore the sword and the mace of the ruler in ceremonies; leader of the cavalry
<i>Staroste</i>	official in counties
<i>Șoltuz</i>	in Moldavia, the elected representative of the townspeople; mayor
<i>Târg</i>	1. pre-urban settlement (used in this sense in the book); 2. town; 3. marketplace; 4. fair; 5. business
<i>Uric</i>	proof of ownership; donation document
<i>Ținut</i>	county in Moldavia
<i>Vecin</i>	serf, in Moldavia
<i>Voievod</i>	prior to the emergence of the Romanian Principalities, local ruler; title that rulers in the Romanian Principalities bore, with a mainly military meaning

*Voi* in Moldavia, representative of the Armenian community; another name for the representative of the townspeople

*Vornic* 1. grand boyar, administrator of a princely residence (had administrative, fiscal, legal, and military duties); 2. in Moldavia, the *vornicul de târg* was the official appointed by the ruler in town

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<sup>1</sup> The Index does not include authors of secondary literature. No explanation has been inserted for place names (towns, villages, provinces), except for cases where the same name is shared by multiple settlements, rivers, regions etc.

As ‘Danube,’ ‘Moldavia,’ ‘Transylvania,’ and ‘Wallachia’ occur very often, these entries have not been inserted in the Index.

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